

5 Chapter Five

5.1 Introduction

Public involvement, consultation, and coordination was initiated prior to, and has occurred throughout, preparation of the RMP process. Guidance for implementing public involvement is contained in 43 CFR, 1601-1610, FPLMA Section 103(d), and the CEQ's NEPA regulations at 40 CFR, 1506.6, and is intended to ensure that federal agencies make a diligent effort to involve the public in preparing planning and NEPA documents.

This chapter is a description of the public outreach and participation opportunities made available through the development of the Proposed RMP/ Final EIS and the coordination and consultation efforts with Native Americans, government agencies, and other stakeholders that have transpired to date. It also includes the BLM response to comments generated by the formal public comment period for the Draft RMP/Draft EIS and a list of preparers of the document. There have been and will continue to be many ways for the public to participate in the planning and implementation processes for public lands under the jurisdiction of the Bakersfield FO.

5.2 Public Scoping and Outreach

5.2.1 Scoping Process

Scoping is the term used in the CEQ regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR, Part 1500 et seq.) to define the early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed in the planning process. The scoping process invites the public to be involved in identifying significant issues of land use management actions. The process also helps identify any issues that are not significant and that can thereby be eliminated from detailed analysis. The list of stakeholders and other interested parties is also confirmed and augmented during the scoping process.

5.2.2 Notice of Intent

The NOI is the legal document notifying the public of the BLM's intent to initiate the planning process and to prepare an EIS for a major federal action. The NOI invites the participation of the affected and interested agencies, organizations, and members of the general public in determining the scope and significant issues to be addressed in the planning alternatives and analyzed in the EIS. The NOI for the Bakersfield RMP was published in the Federal Register on March 4, 2008. The formal scoping period for receipt of public comments ended on May 5, 2008.

5.2.3 Press Releases

Local and regional newspapers throughout the planning area were used to disseminate information on the Bakersfield RMP scoping and planning process. The BLM prepared press releases to notify the public of the project, to announce the open houses, to request public comments, and to provide contact information.

5.2.4 Scoping Letter Mailings

The BLM mailed a letter to interested parties on April 4, 2008, to inform them of the Bakersfield FO RMP planning effort, the location of seven scoping open houses in April 2008, and the opportunity to comment. The letter was mailed to 1,138 individuals on the distribution list compiled by the Bakersfield FO. The same letter was emailed to 453 individuals on April 10, 2008, and 83 additional email addresses on April 22, 2008.

5.2.5 Scoping Meetings

The BLM held seven public scoping meetings in six locations during April 2008. The meetings were held as follows: April 8, Bakersfield (2 meetings), April 9, Taft, April 10, Lake Isabella, April 15, Fresno, April 17, Three Rivers, April 22, San Luis Obispo. Attendance totaled approximately 100 individuals, with the breakdown per meeting as follows:

- April 8, Bakersfield (two meetings): 23 attendees (total for both meetings);
- April 9, Taft: 6 attendees;
- April 10, Lake Isabella: 9 attendees;
- April 15, Fresno: 24 attendees;
- April 17, Three Rivers: 17 attendees; and
- April 22, San Luis Obispo: 7 attendees.

The meetings were held to gather information from the public on the future management of the Bakersfield RMP area. Participants were asked what they valued about these lands, what kinds of activities or uses were important to them, and how they envisioned the area being managed in the future. Each of the meetings followed a similar format, beginning with an informal open house. Members of the public were greeted at the entrance and asked to sign in. Representatives from the Bakersfield FO attended all meetings. Visitors were encouraged to look at various maps and photographic displays arranged around the room and to ask questions; BLM staff mingled and encouraged one-on-one dialogue. After a brief introduction by the Bakersfield FO Manager, staff gave a PowerPoint presentation on resources, challenges, the planning process, what the plan hoped to achieve, and the public's role in contributing to the plan direction and substance.

After the presentation, BLM staff held a question and answer period of roughly ten minutes. BLM staff then guided participants through three questions regarding identifying the public's vision for the Bakersfield RMP area, identifying goals and common values, and suggesting specific actions for achieving those goals. Finally, the BLM Field Manager closed the meeting by thanking the participants and briefly outlined the next steps in the planning process, highlighting the role and importance of continuing public involvement. This format was followed at all of the meetings.

Attendees were encouraged to mail in written comments and questions or to fill out comment cards specific to the Bakersfield RMP. Copies of the planning criteria were also made available at the comment table.

A complete listing of the organizations and agencies that were represented among the people who signed in at the public meetings is included in the Bakersfield Resource Management Plan Scoping Report.

5.2.6 Public Scoping Results

A total of 142 responses were received, including scoping comment sheets, letters and e-mails. Twenty-one of the letters were form letters. Comments were received from 26 organizations, seven businesses, and four agencies. The scoping input was used to formulate the issues addressed in the planning process, as described in Chapter 1. Chapter 1 also provides a summary of issues, submitted during the input period, that are beyond the scope of the RMP. A full copy of the scoping report is available from the BLM or from the Web site.

5.2.7 Project Web Site

In the spring of 2008, a BKFO RMP/EIS project Web site was launched to serve as a clearinghouse for project information during the planning effort. It provided background information on the BKFO, information on the past Caliente RMP completed in 1997, an outline of the planning process, and a schedule of upcoming scoping meetings. The Web site, at http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/bakersfield/Programs/planning/caliente_rmp_revision.html, provided a link for site visitors to submit comments about the project, cacalrmp@blm.gov.

5.2.8 Protect Telephone

A phone number, (661) 391-6022, was made available for comments or questions about the planning process; one caller submitted a comment.

5.2.9 Additional Outreach

Resource Advisory Councils (RACs) in and near the Bakersfield RMP Planning Area are participating in this planning effort. Four members of the Central California RAC, one member from the Carrizo Plain Monument Advisory RAC, and one member from the Desert Advisory Council have been participants to date. The Central California RAC receives regular updates on the progress of the planning process at their meetings.

5.3 Consultation and Coordination

The Bakersfield RMP will provide guidance for public land spread across a vast portion of central California and necessarily requires the coordination of a variety of organizations with interests in the area. Among those are governmental bodies that create, administer, and monitor policy for these lands, as well as adjacent lands. The BLM established a coordinated effort in developing the Bakersfield RMP by seeking the active participation of these parties.

In the spring of 2008, the BLM invited 16 local, state, and federal representatives to participate as cooperating agencies for the Bakersfield RMP. None of the agencies accepted this offer to participate in the Bakersfield FO planning process as cooperating agencies. Both the National Park Service and California Department of Fish and Game expressed a desire to stay involved in the planning process, but not the need to have cooperating agency status.

The following section documents the BLM's consultation and coordination efforts during the preparation of this Proposed RMP/Final EIS. Consultation is an ongoing effort throughout the entire process of developing the Bakersfield RMP.

5.3.1 Native American Consultation

Federally recognized Native American tribes have a unique legal and political relationship with the government of the United States. Executive Order 13175 requires federal agencies to coordinate and consult on a government-to-government basis with sovereign Native American tribal governments whose interests may be directly and substantially affected by activities on federally administered lands. Other laws, regulations, Department of the Interior (DOI) guidance and executive orders require consultation to identify the cultural values, the religious beliefs, the traditional practices, and the legal rights of Native American people, who could be affected by BLM actions on federal lands. These include the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (as amended), American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, DOI Secretarial Order No. 3215 (DOI 2000), 512 Department Manual Chapter 2 (DOI 1995), BLM Manual H-8160-1 (DOI 1994), and Executive Order 13007, Indian Sacred Sites.

Native American tribes are formally engaged in the planning process, as with many other federal actions, through a process of consultation. Legislation, policy and guidance require the BLM to consult with federally recognized Native American tribes regarding any actions conducted by the agency which have the potential to affect places of traditional or religious importance to them. As such, the Bakersfield FO initiated contact on April 4, 2008 in conjunction with the public scoping process; with both federally and non-federally recognized tribes whose traditional territories are known to lie within the Planning Area.

The federally recognized Native American tribes listed below were recontacted via certified letter in April 2011 and invited to participate in government-to-government consultation prior to the release of the Draft RMP/Draft EIS. Upon the release of the Draft RMP/Draft EIS copies were sent to each federally recognized Native American tribes and several non-recognized Native American tribes, groups, and individuals along with a package of supplemental information and maps. Follow up letters, phone calls, and emails offered to schedule one-on-one presentations, and again, extended the invitation to initiate formal government-to-government consultation to the federally recognized tribes and informal coordination and consultation with the non-recognized tribes. Informational meetings and presentations were conducted with four of the federally recognized Native American tribes and six non-recognized Native American tribes and groups. Subsequent to the end of the public review and comment period on the Draft RMP/Draft EIS, one of these groups, the Tejon Indian Tribe, became federally recognized (January 1, 2012). Prior to their formal recognition, BLM coordinated with the Tejon Indian Tribe by providing them with information, maps and guidance regarding review of the Draft RMP/Draft EIS. In addition, a formal presentation was provided for the attending members at a Tribal Council meeting. None of the federally or non-federally recognized Native American tribes chose to conduct formal government-to-government or informal consultation.

- Big Sandy Rancheria
- Cold Springs Rancheria
- North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians
- Picayune Rancheria of Chukchansi Indians
- Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians
- Table Mountain Rancheria
- Tachi Yokut Tribe of the Santa Rosa Rancheria
- Tejon Indian Tribe
- Tule River Reservation

~~This consultation included a certificated notification letter describing the RMP and planning process with follow up to include invitation to face-to-face meetings with the Field Manager and tribal leadership.~~

~~In addition to these federally recognized Tribes, the Bakersfield FO engaged with many non-federally recognized Native American tribes, groups, and individuals.~~

5.3.2 Cultural Resource Consultation

The BLM has specific responsibilities and authorities to consider, plan for, protect, and enhance historic properties and other cultural properties that may be affected by its actions or actions it permits. The principal federal law addressing cultural resources is the NHPA (16 USC, Section 470), and its implementing regulations (36 CFR, 800). These regulations, commonly referred to as the Section 106 process, describe the procedures for identifying and evaluating historic properties, for assessing the effects of federal actions on historic properties, and for guiding project proponents consulting with appropriate agencies to avoid, reduce, or minimize adverse effects. State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs) have responsibilities under state law and under Section 101(b)(3) of the NHPA to “consult with the appropriate Federal agencies in accordance with [NHPA] on Federal undertakings that may affect historic properties, and the content and sufficiency of any plans developed to protect, manage, or to reduce or mitigate harm to such properties.” The BLM notified the California SHPO at the initiation of the planning process. The SHPO was invited to review and formally consult regarding the Bakersfield Draft RMP/Draft EIS. The SHPO declined to review, comment, or consult on the Draft RMP/Draft EIS. An additional opportunity for review and consultation will occur during the Governor’s Consistency review of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.

5.3.3 Special Status Species Consultation

Coordination with CDFG and USFWS is ongoing with regard to special status species. Section 7 consultation will include the preparation of a biological assessment by the BLM and a subsequent biological opinion prepared by the USFWS.

5.3.4 Air Quality Coordination

Coordination between the BLM and air regulatory agencies is ongoing with regard to air quality. Informal communications that were made by the BLM as part of this planning effort include phone and email correspondence with the EPA, Region IX, the California ARB, and San Joaquin Valley APCD staff. These air regulatory entities were initially contacted for guidance regarding conformity and its applicability at the land use planning stage; however subsequent meetings with the local air pollution control district have specifically addressed the content of the RMP and its analysis of air resources.

Through the recent Memorandum of Understanding Among the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of the Interior, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Regarding Air Quality Analyses and Mitigation For Federal Oil and Gas Decisions Through the National Environmental Policy Act Process (effective June 23, 2011), signatories commit to a clearly defined approach to compliance with NEPA regarding air quality in connection with oil and gas development on Federal lands. This MOU applies to all NEPA analyses commencing after the effective date, and all NEPA analyses begun after September 23, 2011. Since the Bakersfield Draft RMP/Draft EIS was made available for public comment on September 9, 2011, during the “grace period”, provisions of the MOU are not directly applicable to this NEPA analysis.

5.3.5 Travel Management Planning Coordination

The BLM hosted two trails and routes data collection workshops, one in Lake Isabella (February 25, 2009) and one in Taft (February 26, 2009). The workshops were held to allow the public to review the BLM's inventory for accuracy and completeness, to provide information on routes that are missing from the BLM's inventory, and to offer suggestions for reroutes or new trail sections that would complement the existing route system. The comment period for routes and trails data collection was open until March 13, 2009.

The BLM also extended invitations to local agencies, user groups, and authorized public lands users to discuss the route designation process. The BLM met with Stewards of the Sequoia, California, Off-Road Vehicle Association, the Taft Motorcycle Club, and a representative of Kern County. Local grazing lessees were also consulted regarding their use of routes related to grazing practices. Throughout the process, the Bakersfield FO coordinated efforts with the Sequoia National Forest, which is also designating routes on National Forest System lands.

In June 2009, the Bakersfield FO presented its route designation maps to the OHV subgroup and to the Central California RAC.

5.3.6 Social and Economic Workshops

On April 15 and 16, 2009, the Bakersfield FO hosted two social and economic workshops in Bakersfield and Lake Isabella. Nine members of the public and local government representatives attended the workshops, in addition to BLM representatives. The purpose of these workshops was to obtain input on how local populations interact with public lands. The goal for the BLM is to complete and approve a collaborative, community-based RMP that reflects careful consideration of the local and regional factors unique to the Planning Area. To this end, these workshops provided an opportunity for stakeholders from local communities to participate in the planning process. Attendees discussed economic trends in the region and developed visions for the future of their communities. The attendees also discussed how BLM management of public lands could help support economic growth in local communities.

5.3.7 State of California Consistency

The Draft RMP/Draft EIS was reviewed by appropriate State agencies for consistency with California state plans and policies. The only comment letter received from a State agency was from the Native American Heritage Commission; this letter only provided a list of Native American contacts to assure our mailing list was up to date.

The Proposed RMP/Final EIS will also undergo a 60-day governor's consistency review.

5.4 Public Review and Comment on the Draft RMP/Draft EIS

The Bakersfield Draft RMP/Draft EIS was released for public review on September 9th 2011. A *Federal Register* Notice initiated the formal 90 day public comment period which closed on December 9th 2011.

During the public comment period the BLM conducted seven public meetings to describe the plan and alternatives, and give the public an opportunity to ask any questions they may have had concerning the plan or planning process. These meetings and their attendance are described in the following table (Table 5.1):

Table 5.1
Draft RMP/Draft EIS Public Meetings

Location	Date	Attendance
Bakersfield (1400 hrs)	10/12/2011	11
Bakersfield (1800 hrs)	10/12/2011	7
San Luis Obispo	10/13/2011	14
Kern Valley (Lake Isabella)	10/17/2011	17
Three Rivers	10/18/2011	53
Taft	10/19/2011	15
Prather	10/20/2011	11

Source: BLM 2011a

In addition to the above meetings the BLM was invited to attend a number of stakeholder meetings to present the RMP and answer specific questions the stakeholder groups may have had.

As a result of the public comment period the BLM received 274 written comment letters. These letters were cataloged (Appendix P) and analyzed for substantive content. The individual substantive comments were studied by the Interdisciplinary Team and appropriate changes to the document made. The majority of non-substantive comments expressed support for Wild and Scenic River suitability determinations, or requested Alternative C to be implemented with regard to ACECs and lands managed for wilderness characteristics. These comments were brief and included no substantive supporting justification.

The majority of substantive comments concerned Comprehensive Trail and Travel Management addressing a localized concern on specific routes. Other comments included concerns over ACEC boundaries, renewable energy development, rockhounding, locatable mineral exploration and Wild and Scenic Rivers. Responses to these substantive comments are included below.

5.5 Response to Comments by Resource

5.5.1 Air and Atmospheric Values

5.5.1.1 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP fails to discuss the impacts of the proposed Temblor Range SRMA and associated OHV activity on air quality, specifically fine particulate dust. The decision to designate this area may be in conflict with SJVAPCB goal of significantly reducing this criteria pollutant. It should be noted the proposed SRMA is upwind of major population centers and the anticipated recreation activity will be a likely source of dust.

Comment Source(s): 198-4

Response: The PRMP has been modified to address this concern through the addition of text concerning the impact of the Temblor Range SRMA (Chapter 4, Section 4.1 – Air and Atmospheric Values). In addition, information has been added that describes sensitive

receptors (Chapter 3, Section 3.1 - Air and Atmospheric Values) and how these may be impacted by the proposed plan (Chapter 4, Section 4.1 – Air and Atmospheric Values).

5.5.1.2 Comment (paraphrased):

Comment (paraphrased): The DRMP fails to provide a rough estimate of the change in greenhouse gas emissions for Alternative D compared with the other four grazing alternatives. This missing analysis is the minimal level of analysis proposed in the Bureau of Land Management H-1604-1 Land Use Planning Handbook - Guidance on Addressing Climate Change in the Planning Process. It is critical this analysis be included in the RMP as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has determined that livestock is responsible for 18 percent of greenhouse gas emissions world-wide (Steinfeld et al., 2006), and other authorities believe this is an underestimate of the contribution of livestock emissions to greenhouse gas emissions (Goodland, R. and Anhang, J. 2009).

Comment Source(s): 253-7

Response: The PRMP includes a qualitative approach to the analysis of climate change; this is consistent with BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (1610-1) Guidance on Addressing Climate Change in the Planning Process in that this type of analysis is in accordance with and reflective of the extent to which the climate change information is needed in order to make planning decisions.

5.5.1.3 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should include a “climate change mitigation and adaptation plan” to account for, minimize, and mitigate the effects of climate change. The long duration of this management plan (most likely two or three decades), and the extreme warming anticipated for the southwestern United States, warrants this plan to account for, minimize, and mitigate the effects of climate change. Furthermore, the RMP should discuss the applicability of, and utilize as appropriate, the climate change and carbon tools highlighted by the Forest Service's Climate Change Resource Center. Additional information at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/ccrc/tools>.

Comment Source(s): 261-4, 261-5, 261-65, 261-68, 261-69

Response: The U.S. Department of the Interior's climate change initiative and the BLM's approach to addressing climate change (Chapter 3, Section 3.1 – Air and Atmospheric Values) do not require a “climate change mitigation and adaptation plan” at this level of planning. The tools identified in the Forest Service's Climate Change Resource Center are some the many tools currently used for providing implementation level analysis as appropriate.

5.5.1.4 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should identify options for mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and consider whether a quantitative comparison of projected emissions for the alternatives, would be useful to decision-makers and the public (if so, it should be included in the RMP). Furthermore, the RMP should adopt the alternative that minimizes and mitigates GHG emissions to the greatest reasonable extent.

Comment Source(s): 261-64, 261-66, 261-67

Response: The PRMP identifies GHG emissions mitigation along with other mitigations for air quality in Appendix A. It has been determined that, as the majority GHG emission mitigation occur at the implementation level, a quantitative comparison of projected emissions for each alternatives provides no value to the authorized officer in making land use planning level decisions.

5.5.1.5 *Comment (paraphrased):*

It is recommended that the RMP provides direction that the following mitigation measures, in addition to local, state and federal requirements, be included in project-specific Construction Emissions Mitigation Plans in order to reduce impacts associated with emissions of PM, NOx, ROG and other toxics from construction-related activities:

- Stabilize open storage piles and disturbed areas by covering and/or applying water or chemical/organic dust palliative where appropriate at active and inactive sites during workdays, weekends, holidays, and windy conditions;
- Install wind fencing and phase grading operations where appropriate, and operate water trucks for stabilization of surfaces under windy conditions; and
- Prevent spillage when hauling material and operating non-earthmoving equipment and limit speeds to 15 miles per hour. Limit speed of earth-moving equipment to 10 mph.
- Plan construction scheduling to minimize vehicle trips;
- Limit idling of heavy equipment to less than 5 minutes and verify through unscheduled inspections (Note: The California Air Resources Board has a number of mobile source anti-idling requirements, see their website at: <http://www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/truck-idling/truck-idling.htm>);
- Maintain and tune engines per manufacturer's specifications to perform at CARB and/or EPA certification levels, prevent tampering, and conduct unscheduled inspections to ensure these measures are followed;
- If practicable, lease new, clean equipment meeting the most stringent of applicable Federal' or State Standards. In general, commit to the best available emissions control technology. Tier 4 engines should be used for project construction equipment to the maximum extent feasible;
- Lacking availability of non-road construction equipment that meets Tier 4 engine standards, the responsible agency should commit to using CARB and EPA-verified particulate traps, oxidation catalysts and other appropriate controls where suitable to reduce emissions of diesel particulate matter and other pollutants at the construction site; and
- Consider alternative fuels such as natural gas and electricity (plug-in or battery).
- Prepare an inventory of all equipment prior to construction and identify the suitability of add-on emission controls for each piece of equipment before groundbreaking;
- Develop a construction traffic and parking management plan that maintains traffic flow and plan construction to minimize vehicle trips; and
- Identify sensitive receptors in the project area, such as children, elderly, and infirmed, and specify the means by which you will minimize impacts to these populations (e.g. locate construction equipment and staging zones away from sensitive receptors and building air intakes).

Comment Source(s): 261-21

Response: The PRMP provides (Appendix A) examples of best management practices (mitigation measures) to address air quality including some of those suggested in the comment. The application of specific best management practices varies based on the proposed project and is therefore beyond the scope of this broad scale RMP.

5.5.1.6 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP contains insufficient information to evaluate and disclose potential impacts to air quality (including cumulative and indirect impacts) and air quality related values for all the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for each fully evaluated alternative.

A thorough analysis of air quality is essential because the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin has some of the worst 8-hour ozone and PM_{2.5} problems in the nation and due to the proximity of the proposed development and its associated projected emissions to eight federal Class I areas (Yosemite, Kings Canyon and Sequoia National Parks; Kaiser, John Muir, Dome Land, San Rafael and Minarets Wilderness Areas). In addition to these sensitive areas within the RMP Planning Area, six additional Class I areas are located within 75 km of the planning boundary (p. 207). The RMP should quantify secondary PM_{2.5} formation resulting from nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds and sulfur oxides associated with all foreseeable activities, and discuss impacts to air quality related values for each Class I area identified.

Comment Source(s): 261-6, 261-7, 261-8

Response: The PRMP focuses analysis on only those National Ambient Air Quality Standards for which the Planning Area is in non-attainment or at maintenance level, and on those criteria pollutants that BLM activities have the potential to emit. Analysis of those Standards for which the Planning Area is in attainment and of those criteria pollutants for which BLM activities do not contribute to a change to the existing condition is not necessary to make a reasoned choice between the alternatives.

The quantification of secondary PM_{2.5} is outside the scope of this broad scale RMP and would be addressed through project specific analysis if appropriate.

The PRMP has been modified (Chapter 3, Section 3.1 – Air and Atmosphere Values) to clarify that there are no major stationary sources, as defined by the EPA on public lands within the Decision Area. As no major stationary sources exist, or are reasonably foreseeable based on the proposed plan, the PRMP does not discuss impacts for each Class I area.

5.5.1.7 Comment (paraphrased):

To address potential impacts associated with the emission increases, the RMP should include an Air Resources Management Plan, as exemplified by BLM Wyoming's recently developed Lander Air Resources Management Plan. The Lander plan could be used as a template to apply to the Bakersfield RMP. The Air Resources Management Plan outlines specific requirements, including modeling and mitigation, for proponents of projects that have the potential to generate air emissions and adversely impact air resources within the Planning Area.

Comment Source(s): 261-9, 261-12

Response: The PRMP has been modified to include an Air Resources Management Plan (Appendix A).

5.5.1.8 Comment (paraphrased):

Since the development of the DRMP, the EPA, U.S. Department of Interior and the U.S. Department of Agriculture signed a Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Air Quality Analyses and Mitigation for Federal Oil and Gas Decisions through the NEPA Process. It is noted that the DRMP was issued within 90 days of the effective date of the MOU; therefore, the MOU's provisions are not directly applicable to this RMP. Nonetheless, it is recommended that the RMP more directly integrate the standardized approach developed in the MOU. Specifically the RMP should calculate emissions from existing active wells within the Planning Area as well as the approximate 4,000 new wells expected to be drilled over the next 10 years. Confirm that the 2009 ARB emissions inventory, relied upon in Appendix A, reflects a rate of 360 new wells per year as assumed under the No Action Alternative. Furthermore, the RMP should include a discussion of the applicability (or lack of applicability) of, and integrate standardized approaches developed in, the Air Quality Analyses and Mitigation for Federal Oil and Gas Decisions MOU.

Comment Source(s): 261-10, 261-11, 261-13

Response: The PRMP has been modified to discuss the applicability of the Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Air Quality Analyses and Mitigation for Federal Oil and Gas Decisions through the NEPA Process (Chapter 1, Section 1.6.2 – Planning Process). Furthermore, additional information regarding emissions from oil and gas production has been included in Chapter 3, Section 3.1 – Air and Atmospheric Values.

The PRMP has been modified to clarify the inclusion of emissions resulting from federal actions in ARB emissions inventories (Chapter 3, Section 3.1 – Air and Atmospheric Values and Chapter 4, Section 4.1 – Air and Atmospheric Values).

5.5.1.9 Comment (paraphrased):

It is preferred that the RMP include a quantitative analysis that utilizes air quality modeling of the potential impacts of activities authorized under the RMP. However, air quality impacts can be adequately evaluated and disclosed, provided that one of the following approaches is pursued:

- 1) Conduct basin-wide dispersion modeling based on the emissions inventory and include this information in the RMP; or
- 2) Utilize representative photochemical grid modeling planned for another project with the appropriate modeling domain for the SJV to determine the contribution of the RMP activities and include this information in the RMP; or
- 3) Include an air resources management plan (using Landers as a template). The air resources management plan should be included in the RMP and contain additional detail clarifying how and when modeling will be performed and what mitigation could be implemented.

Comment Source(s): 261-14, 261-15

Response: The PRMP has been modified to include an Air Resources Management Plan (Appendix A).

5.5.1.10 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should clarify the General Conformity regulatory framework and how it applies to the proposed RMP and future project-specific implementation. The RMP should demonstrate conformity for all pollutants for which the San Joaquin and the South Central Coast Air Basin are in nonattainment or maintenance status, and whose construction or operational emissions would exceed the applicable de minimis levels. Conformity may be demonstrated by showing that the total direct and indirect emissions from the action are specifically identified and accounted for in the SIP. Furthermore, the RMP should clarify to what extent conformity analyses will be conducted on a project specific basis for actions proposed under this RMP (Section 4.1.7). If analysis of general conformity to the SIP is more appropriate at the project-specific analysis level, it is recommended that the RMP include a specific commitment to future project-specific general conformity analysis.

Comment Source(s): 261-16, 261-18, 261-19

Response: The PRMP has been modified to address this concern (Chapter 3, Section 3.1 – Air and Atmospheric Resources). Furthermore, conformity has been demonstrated by showing that the total direct and indirect emissions from the action are specifically identified and accounted for in the SIP (Appendix A).

5.5.1.11 Comment (paraphrased):

It is recommended that considering the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin's current "maintenance" attainment status for carbon monoxide, CO be incorporated into any future conformity analyses.

Comment Source(s): 261-17

Response: The PRMP has been modified to include discussion of carbon monoxide (Chapter 3, Section 3.1 – Air and Atmospheric Values and Chapter 4, Section 4.1 - Air and Atmospheric Values). Conformity analysis would only be conducted if emissions exceeded de minimus levels.

5.5.1.12 Comment (paraphrased):

In light of the exceptionally poor air quality in the majority of the Planning Area, it is recommended that the RMP include commitments to aggressive air quality mitigation measures during future project-specific construction.

Comment Source(s): 261-20

Response: The PRMP includes a commitment to design projects and authorized activities to be in conformance with SIPs and reduce emissions through the application of best management practices (Chapter 2, Section 2.1 – Air and Atmospheric Values).

5.5.2 Biological Resources

5.5.2.1 Comment (paraphrased):

The terms “seasonal closure” and “restrict equestrian use” (DRMP, page 53) without further clarification as to when and under what conditions these closures would occur, connotes the arbitrary closure of thousands of acres. The RMP should provide specific criteria under which these restrictions would be implemented. Since the BLM has these tools at their disposal, is it necessary to make these general decisions in the RMP? Furthermore, the closures and restrictions do not appear to be supported scientifically. If identifiable hazards to the environment are present these restrictions are warranted but not solely to equestrian use.

Comment Source(s): 199-3, 199-4, 199-21

Response: The decision referred to in the comment provides examples of how public lands uses may be eliminated, relocated, or redesigned pending site-specific NEPA analysis that identifies a reason for this action. This decision provides future guidance for how resource conflicts may be resolved.

5.5.2.2 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP proposes the prohibition of equestrian cross-country travel (page 56) at Atwell Island "for protection of sensitive biological resources and to restore retired farm land to native habitat". There is no scientific support provided as a rationale for this decision and it would seem that the prohibition, if needed, should include mechanized vehicles, hiking and camping.

Comment Source(s): 199-5

Response: While cross-country equestrian is generally allowed on public lands, the Atwell Island area is undergoing restoration and it has been determined that only on-trail equestrian use is appropriate to further the restoration objectives. Cross-country travel by motorized or mechanized vehicles is prohibited in any area designated OHV Limited or Closed. Atwell Island is within an OHV Limited area and so no further prohibition of cross-country travel is necessary. Overnight camping is also prohibited to meet restoration objectives.

5.5.2.3 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should adopt Alternative C with regard to the collection of firewood for camping to prevent the continued depletion of small diameter woody material in Keyesville SRMA. Woody material has already been depleted by campers resulting in the loss of habitat and reduction in numbers of some species, such as the Sierra subspecies of the night lizard. In addition, the existing prohibition against the cutting of live and dead standing trees should be more strictly enforced. BLM should use local public media to publicize the names of the violators as a deterrent to others.

Comment Source(s): 214-12, 214-23

Response: The analysis provided in the PRMP (Chapter 4, Section 4.2 – Biological Resources (Alternative B) and Chapter 4, Section 4.15 – Recreation and Visitor Services (Alternative C))

addressed both the impacts to species and the impacts to recreational experiences based on the firewood collection prohibition. The decision (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2 – Biological Resources) limiting the collection of firewood to a specific size provides a balanced approach to benefiting both resources.

The Sierra night lizard (a rock-dwelling species) is not known to occupy the habitat provided by dead and down woody material and is restricted to a small area in the western edge of the Greenhorn Mountains near Granite Station.

Specific enforcement actions are beyond the scope of this broad scale RMP.

5.5.2.4 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should provide direction to maintain the Pearl Harbor Memorial exclusion fencing and manage the area as a long term habitat restoration project. Furthermore, non-natural objects and non-native trees should be removed from the area.

Comment Source(s): 214-14

Response: The requested action (fence removal) is beyond the scope of this broad scale RMP and would be addressed through site-specific planning. The PRMP does provide for the removal of non-native trees to enhance of restore habitat conditions (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2 – Biological Resources).

5.5.2.5 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The DRMP fails to adequately discuss the impact of utility scale wind energy development and other resource uses at a landscape level. The analysis needs to consider the landscape context to assess the relative importance of public lands to wildlife, and to evaluate the potential cumulative direct and indirect impacts resulting from siting of wind facilities and associated infrastructure (roads, transmission lines, substations). The RMP should provide regional data and analyses— including barrier effects, habitat fragmentation, displacement and behavioral changes, population-scale impacts, and indirect effects.

Comment Source(s): 239-7

Response: The PRMP has been modified to address this concern through the clarification of the reasonably foreseeable development of wind energy within the Decision Area (Chapter 3, Section 3.12 – Lands and Realty, Chapter 4, Section 4.12 – Lands and Realty, and Appendix M – Reasonably Foreseeable Development Scenario).

5.5.2.6 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The DRMP, Appendix L, Section L.3.3, bullet item 7 does not distinguish between an occupied or un-occupied raptor nests for the application of seasonal restrictions on activities. This needs to be clarified to apply only to an occupied nest in the RMP.

Comment Source(s): 236-3

Response: The Best Management Practices presented in Appendix L of the PRMP are examples of implementation measures that may be used to reduce impacts. The BMP as written is intended to apply to both occupied and un-occupied raptor nests, therefore no clarification is needed. The authorized officer is not limited to the measures listed in Appendix L, nor is there any commitment to use the specific wording presented. Feasibility, application and specific wording will be determined based on site-specific conditions to meet resource objectives for specific management actions.

5.5.2.7 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP, Appendix L, Section L.3.3, bullet item 10 requires actions that are not always feasible. This SOP should be changed in the RMP to read: *“Pipe ends three inches or greater will be covered whenever possible. Open-ended pipes must be inspected prior to moving or welding to prevent injury to wildlife”*.

Comment Source(s): 236-4

Response: Appendix L of the PRMP presents a sampling of best management practices, standard operating procedures and other measures for minimizing environmental effects of various authorized activities on public lands. The authorized officer is not limited to the measures listed in Appendix L, nor is there any commitment to use the specific wording presented. Feasibility, application and specific wording will be determined based on site-specific conditions to meet resource objectives for specific management actions.

5.5.2.8 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should adopt Alternative C as it places an emphasis on conserving cultural and natural resources, maintaining functioning natural systems, and restoring natural systems that are degraded. This is especially important since historically there has been too much emphasis on the extraction and deleterious practices on public lands. Furthermore, the myriad of developmental pressures on public lands are increasing and the speed of which can only be expected to accelerate.

Comment Source(s): 262-1

Response: This comment was presented as a brief request and lacks sufficient detail on which to select an alternative. The conservation of natural resources was addressed in other alternatives of the PRMP through goals and objectives aimed at protecting these resources.

5.5.2.9 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should clarify how adoption of the RMP will modify the administration of Southern California Gas Company’s San Joaquin Valley Programmatic Biological Opinion. Specifically with regard to habitat compensation, review requirements, and avoidance and minimization measures. Furthermore, it should ensure that infeasible minimization and mitigation measures, and reporting and authorization requirements are not imposed above and beyond those already required by Southern California Gas Company’s San Joaquin Valley Programmatic Biological Opinion.

Comment Source(s): 195-4

Response: The administration of the Southern California Gas Company's San Joaquin Valley Programmatic Biological Opinion is beyond the scope of this broad scale RMP. Habitat compensation, review requirements, and avoidance and minimization measures will be determined based on site-specific conditions and the applicable biological opinion or other document establishing these measures. Furthermore, minimization and mitigation measures along with reporting requirements are based on site-specific needs and would be appropriate to the resources being managed.

5.5.2.10 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should clarify the definition of weed (page 58). A weed is any unwanted plant. It is suggested that this language be altered to read "non-native species" if this is what is actually meant. Furthermore, the decision as written in the DRMP to "promote or require the use of weed-free hay" should be clarified to explain how vehicles and equipment arriving from "other areas" (a term that also needs term that also needs defining) could be washed on public lands – will cleaning stations be installed to allow people to comply? In addition how will compliance monitoring be achieved? Finally why are other users (not related to horse and livestock uses) exempt? Anyone travelling through an area with "weeds" can transport them on their clothing boots and vehicles.

Comment Source(s): 199-6, 199-7

Response: The PRMP has been modified to clarify the definition of "weeds" (Glossary). Implementation of the decision stated would be carried out through site-specific action and enforcement the discussion of which is beyond the scope of this broad scale RMP.

5.5.2.11 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should be modified to clearly apply its goals related to protecting essential habitat linkages to the Tehachapi parcels of public land. These parcels form integral part of the Tehachapi Corridor – a habitat linkage of continental importance that connects the Sierra Nevada and the Cascade Ranges with the Coastal Transverse and the Sierra Madres Ranges. Maintaining a connected landscape within the Tehachapi Corridor will enable the continuation of the many natural processes that are critical to species survival including wildlife migration, genetic exchange, adaptation in the face of climate change and range for larger mammals. Losing these parcels to development would undermine the extensive investments made to protect the critical area and compromise the many ecological functions it serves.

Comment Source(s): 217-3

Response: The PRMP has been modified to identify the Tehachapi Linkage as an area of ecological importance for the preservation of the ecological connection between the southern Sierra Nevada Mountains and foothills, and transverse ranges (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2 – Biological Resources). Specific management needed to protect this important linkage is included in the decision.

5.5.2.12 Comment (paraphrased):

The Tehachapi's demonstrate high biodiversity, as documented by several authors (Brewer, Grinnell and Twisselmann), attributed to the unique conjunction of geography, geology and climates. The RMP should be modified to include this information and clearly apply its goal "contribute to maintaining biotic diversity" to the Tehachapis with specific management directives that provide for the protection of these public lands. Furthermore, the RMP should include more thorough biological and other resource inventories before establishing land management policy for these parcels which may foreclose the option of maintaining biotic diversity.

Comment Source(s): 217-5, 217-6

Response: The PRMP has been modified to include additional information regarding the biological resource values on public lands and their contribution to biotic diversity in the Tehachapi area (Chapter 3, Section 3.17 –ACECs). The ecological importance of the Tehachapi area has been highlighted in the PRMP and for the purposes of this decision, there is enough information to make a reasoned choice between the alternatives.

5.5.2.13 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should be modified to include information on, and give consideration to, the presence of Kern Primrose Sphinx Moth and California condor within the Tehachapi Mountains. Specifically the RMP should address protection of public lands parcels within close proximity to other protected lands to provide the intact landscape necessary to maintain natural process needed for the preservation of these species' habitats. Furthermore, the RMP should identify the Tehachapi Mountains as a priority area for acquisitions of Kern Primrose Sphinx Moth habitat and ensure that these public lands remain 'open space' free of structures that could conflict with condor foraging.

Comment Source(s): 221-4, 221-5, 221-6

Response: The PRMP has been modified to include additional information regarding the presence of Kern Primrose Sphinx Moth and California condor within the Tehachapi Mountains (Chapter 3, Section 3.17 –ACECs). Furthermore the identification of the Tehachapi Linkage as an area of ecological importance (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2 – Biological Resources) provides the necessary planning level guidance to protect these public lands. In addition, the PRMP provides direction for the BLM to seek and accept acquisition of lands with high biological value this would include special status species habitat (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.12.1 – Lands and Realty).

5.5.2.14 Comment (paraphrased):

For the protection of California condor the RMP should be modified to include a prohibition on the use of lead based ammunition while engaged in hunting activities on public lands within the Tehachapi Mountains.

Comment Source(s): 221-6

Response: This proposal is outside the authority of the Bureau of Land Management. The State of California through the Department of Fish and Game manages hunting on public lands including any restriction on ammunition types.

5.5.2.15 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should be modified to provide permanent protection and conservation of public lands within the Tehachapi Linkage through designation as an ACEC, or other appropriate designation. Of specific importance are public lands in Township 29S, Range 33E and Township 27S, Range 32E (sections 13, 23, 24, 28, & 36). These lands are of critical importance in maintaining the biodiversity of the region and protecting the important linkage from Sequoia National Forest to the Los Padres and Angeles National Forests.

Comment Source(s): 221-8, 264-1

Response: The PRMP has been modified to address this concern through the appropriate designation of these lands for specific prescriptive management (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2 – Biological Resources).

5.5.2.16 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should include new information with regard to populations of and habitat for Tehachapi slender salamander discovered by 2011 surveys (map provided with public comment). Furthermore, the RMP should ensure protection of these habitats from wind related energy development.

Comment Source(s): 223-2, 223-3

Response: The PRMP has been modified to include this new information regarding these survey results (Chapter 3, Section 3.2 – Biological Resources). The decision concerning Caliente Creek area of ecological importance has been adjusted to include these new populations and accommodate any newly discovered locations (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2 – Biological Resources). Furthermore all these location are within a ROW avoidance area for utility scale renewable energy projects.

5.5.2.17 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should be modified to lessen the time period between weed decision and treatment for newly discovered weed populations. Specifically the RMP should put in place the environmental documentation, planning, and logistical capacity to streamline the response to quickly attack new infestations of non-native, invasive weeds in a much shorter time period. This should include authorization for judicious use of hand crews, equipment, and limited amounts of selected herbicides.

Comment Source(s): 264-10

Response: The comment is beyond the scope of this broad-scale RMP. The BLM has specific direction relating to the use of herbicides on public lands and the control of non-native species would be addressed through site-specific NEPA analysis.

5.5.2.18 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP fails to provide Desired Plant Community (DPC) objectives or guidelines as required by the 1999 Record of Decision for the Central California Standards and Guidelines. The DRMP includes a copy of the Standards and Guidelines but provides no discussion of desired plant Communities, nor does it specify if these have been established, or which, if any, grazing allotments have achieved DPC standards. The RMP should be modified to include a list and description of applicable DPC and the progress (or lack thereof) made towards reaching these DPC provided for each allotment. Without this information it is impossible for either the decision-maker or the public to determine where important species and their habitats are located, and if continued grazing is likely to benefit or impair progress to reaching DPC.

Comment Source(s): 253-4

Response: The PRMP has been modified to clarify priority plant communities and habitats are Desired Plant Communities (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2 – Biological Resources). At this planning level, allotment-specific information is not required for the decision maker to make a reasoned choice between the alternatives. The PRMP does present a variety of information regarding the location of important species and their habitats and the appropriate tools for the protection and conservation of these resources. Specific information can be found in the following sections: Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2 – Biological Resources; Section 2.2.13 – Livestock Grazing; Section 2.2.17 – ACECs; and Chapter 3, Section 3.2 – Biological Resources.

5.5.2.19 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should utilize climate change models available for species of common trees and shrubs, and ecosystems (www.databasin.org) to describe impacts in on these resources in its analysis. The information could further be used to develop adaptation strategies, such as maintaining landscape connectivity.

Comment Source(s): 239-8

Response: Sufficient information is included in the PRMP concerning the impacts of climate change on important biological resources to allow the decision maker to make a reasoned choice between the alternatives. The models and analyses from Data Basin (the Southern Sierra Partnership's "Climate-adapted Conservation Plan for the Southern Sierra Nevada and Tehachapi Mountains", and the "High Terrestrial Intactness" data from the Wind, Wings and Wilderness Project) however, were used to develop the boundaries of the Tehachapi Linkage area of ecological importance.

5.5.2.20 Comment (paraphrased):

BLM should discuss with USFWS the best approach to ensure Biological Opinions are informing the decision process for the RMP. The Final RMP/EIS should provide an update on the consultation process. All updated, or new, Biological Opinions should be included as an appendix. Furthermore, mitigation and monitoring measures that result from consultation with USFWS should be included in the RMP and ultimately the ROD.

Comment Source(s): 261-54, 261-55

Response: Existing biological opinions and informal discussion with the USFWS have contributed to the development of the proposed plan. The PRMP contains information regarding the coordination and consultation with the USFWS (Chapter 1, Section 1.7.1 – Collaboration). Due to the timing and publishing requirements for the PRMP/Final EIS it is not possible to include the biological opinion as an appendix. The biological opinion will, however, be made available with the ROD and Approved RMP.

5.5.2.21 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should establish a monitoring and adaptive management plan for threatened and endangered species. Baseline conditions should be determined before activities that would disturb an area are authorized or initiated, and a monitoring and adaptive management plan should be established to evaluate and respond to the impacts on resources in the Planning Area. At a minimum the RMP should include a description of the monitoring and adaptive management plan, including a description of the funds required to implement them.

Comment Source(s): 261-61

Response: This request including the identification of funding sources is beyond the scope of this broad scale RMP. The USFWS establishes the overall guidance for monitoring and management of threatened and endangered species through Recovery Plans. Surveys for biological resources, biological monitoring, and post-activity reports are undertaken in association with implementation level actions.

5.5.2.22 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should consider restriction on all travel – not only equine, through the giant sequoia groves.

Comment Source(s): 199-22

Response: Through the analysis provided in the PRMP it has been determined that no special management for travel is required in the giant sequoia groves. As such the proposed plan alternative does not propose any special restrictions.

5.5.2.23 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP describes “Conserved Land Policy and Route Density Considerations” and provides these as parameters for implementation level decisions. Route designations are made utilizing the minimization criteria and Field Office specific criteria. It is assumed that limiting surface disturbance to 25% of each 640 acre of wildlife corridor area would apply to routes of travel as well as other activities. The only reference supporting a limit to surface disturbance in the Temblors is the draft Kern Valley Floor Habitat Conservation Plan (KVFHCP). Apparently this plan was never formally adopted by Kern County as the cover page describes it as a public draft. Therefore the RMP should not apply the practice of limiting surface disturbance to 25% of each 640 acres of wildlife corridor to route designation as it does not appear to be required in any of the official adopted plans for the Temblor area.

Comment Source(s): 226-13

Response: All disturbances, regardless of cause, are included in the evaluation, since all disturbances remove habitat. The BLM chooses to maintain the 90% (Reserves) and 75% (Corridors) management for reserves and corridors on public lands to meet our responsibility under Section 7(a)1 of the Endangered Species Act to use our authorities to further the purposes of the act by carrying out programs for the conservation of listed species. Although this management concept is presented in the KVFHCP a draft document, it is also discussed in the 1997 Caliente RMP and considered to be the best and appropriate management of habitats on the San Joaquin Valley Floor.

5.5.2.24 Comment (paraphrased):

The DEIS fails to take a hard look at impacts to biological resources from livestock grazing as it did not discuss the findings of relevant and important studies, including Christian et.al. (unpublished); Loesser et.al. (2006); Kimball & Schiffman (2003); Germano et.al. (2001); Loft et.al. (1991); Kie et.al. (1991); and Jones, A. (2000). In addition, the DEIS does not explain how utilization and turn-out criteria will benefit or protect each of the 85 federally listed species, 5 candidate species, 70 CESA species, 241 BLM sensitive species, and other species identified in the Planning Area. Therefore, the DRMP should be revised to explain how each of the special status species occurring in the planning area will be protected and conserved. Furthermore, the DRMP should also explain the available mitigation measures and the results of implementing these measures on the impacts to special status species from livestock grazing.

Comment Source(s): 253-6

Response: The PRMP has been modified to include the findings of relevant and important studies, such as those listed in the comment (Chapter 4, Section 4.2 – Biological Resources).

The presentation of specific special status species accounts and therefore a discussion of how each will be protected and conserved is beyond the scope of this broad scale RMP and would be addressed during project implementation through site-specific analysis. A generalized impact analysis, appropriate for the RMP, for special status species as a result of livestock grazing allocations and guidelines is presented in Chapter 4, Section 4.2 – Biological Resources, for each alternative.

Central California Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management are described in detail in Appendix F-1 and will be implemented to ensure that watersheds are properly functioning; ecological processes are in order; water quality complies with State standards; and habitats of protected species are in order. Furthermore, Best Management Practices and Standard Operating Procedures listed in Appendix L contain measures to reduce impacts from livestock grazing. The application of these mitigation measures is an implementation level action; as such, the impacts to special status species resulting from the application of these measures would be analyzed at the project level during site specific NEPA.

5.5.2.25 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should be modified the remedy the false conclusions drawn with regard the impacts of livestock grazing. Specifically the section entitled General Impacts that Occur under All Alternatives, Livestock Grazing (page 387). The analysis of impacts in the section is based on two

scientific sources with questionable relevance to the area of analysis and the impacts being described. For example, the prospect that "*Livestock transport and introduce weed seed cling to their fur and in their manure. Livestock hooves break and trample soil crusts and create germination sites for weedy species. Movement of livestock across non-level landscapes results in a generalized net movement of soil down slope; even moderate slopes are likely to suffer soil erosion under moderate grazing pressure*" is cited to an article written by Mwendera, et al. 1997, which is an article which studies human impact and human waste (read untreated sewage) in either Swaziland or Zimbabwe (it's not clear which). Furthermore, the reference to Hoorman and McCutcheon, 2005, for the proposition concerning impacts to riparian areas, including loss of vegetation, soil disturbance, is a study of cattle operations in Ohio. Cattle operations in Ohio employ far different ranching methods that are different from anywhere west of the 100th Meridian (Beyond the Hundreth Meridian, Wallace Stegner, 1954, PP3, 214.). As such these studies have no real relevance or bearing on the RMP. Every conclusion in this section is unsupported by any evidence, and when one is provided, it is demonstrably false.

Comment Source(s): 199-23, 199-24

Response: The PRMP has been modified to correctly cite the 1997 Mwendera et al study in its Bibliography. This study is entitled "The effects of livestock grazing on surface runoff and soil erosion from sloping pasturelands in the Ethiopian highlands", and is relevant to the discussion of livestock grazing impacts as it studies and identifies down-slope soil movement resulting from livestock in varying levels of slope under both high and moderate grazing pressure.

The cited Hoorman and McCutcheon article is a an Ohio State University Fact Sheet entitled "Livestock and Streams - negative effect of livestock grazing riparian areas" this fact sheet summarized impacts to riparian areas from a wide variety of scientific studies conducted throughout the world under a variety of livestock grazing operations with varying applicability to the Decision Area. Many of the concepts presented in this fact sheet are relevant to the general discussion of livestock grazing impacts on riparian areas provided in the PRMP.

5.5.3 Cave and Karst Resources

5.5.3.1 Comment (paraphrased):

The possible classification of Millerton Cave under Alternative C as Class III (entry requires specific authorization that may only be provided for research and education) may result in undesirable impacts to cave resources. It has been repeatedly demonstrated that cave closures (where no physical barrier is installed) are often only adhered to be cavers and continue to be visited by those with less knowledge of caving, conservation, and outdoor ethics.

Comment Source(s): 219-1, 231-1, 235-1, 244-1, 245-1, 245-6, 247-1, 249-1, 251-1

Response: The proposed plan alternative of the PRMP proposes to designate Millerton Cave as a significant cave managed as Class I (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.3 – Cave and Karst Resources).

5.5.3.2 Comment (paraphrased):

The proposal to designate Millerton Cave as Class I (open) would continue to allow the current heavy use that may result in the loss of potential study area and habitat degradation. The unique geology of the cave provides rare research opportunities into geochemical study of granitic rock talus/bedrock erosion caves. Designation as Class III (entry requires specific authorization that may only be provided for research and education) would appropriately control access to alleviate this concern and preserve important research opportunities.

Comment Source(s): 255-1

Response: There has been no identified/documentated damage to Millerton Cave based on current use. Furthermore there have been no requests beyond those generated by BLM itself for study of the unique geology of the cave. As such, the PRMP classifies Millerton Cave as Class I to continue to provide for academic, research and recreational activities.

5.5.4 Cultural Resources**5.5.4.1 Comment (paraphrased):**

The RMP should clarify the process undertaken should human remains be discovered on public lands. Specifically the RMP should acknowledge the need to follow California Government Code §27460 and possibly California Government Code §27491 and California Health & Safety Code §7050.5 if applicable.

Comment Source(s): 2-3

Response: The PRMP states that all required regulations and procedures will be followed during the management of cultural resources. This includes the inadvertent discovery of human remains. In the event that human remains are discovered on BLM managed lands or during a project being administered by the BLM, BLM policy follows California State law which requires that all work must cease, the area must be secured and the County Coroner's Office of the county where the remains are located is notified. Once the determination has been made that remains are of Native American ancestry, the BLM will initiate the proper procedures required under Federal regulations regarding the disposition of the remains.

5.5.4.2 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP does not indicate there are any changes in the interpretation or implementation of existing regulations (e.g., NEPA, Section 106 & 110 of NHPA, NAGPRA, ARPA) or the way in which the projects are reviewed for potential adverse effects. The RMP should clarify whether projects will continue to be screened on a case-by-case basis regardless of which alternative is chosen.

Comment Source(s): 195-5

Response: The BLM administers public lands within a framework of numerous laws, including those listed in the comment. The RMP is required to be in compliance with these laws and

appropriately apply these authorities in the management of the resource. The PRMP, Chapter 4, Section 4.4 – Cultural Resources provides definitions and assumptions common to all alternatives utilized during the analysis of impacts to cultural resources, it also defines what constitutes an adverse effect in this section and states that “all proposed undertakings and authorizations will comply with BLM authorities designed to preserve and protect cultural resources”.

5.5.4.3 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should address protection, preservation and restoration of the Walker Cabin, associated barn and other historic mining buildings to resolve issues with vandalism and destruction. This could be achieved through the establishment of a cultural resource monitor to be resident at these sites. In addition to the historic resources within the Keyesville SRMA, Native American sites and values should be protected. Coordination with the Tubatulabal tribe should occur before any action affecting these sacred sites is implemented.

Comment Source(s): 214-20

Response: The specific implementation actions required to protect historic structures and sites in the Keyesville area are outside the scope of this broad scale RMP and would be more appropriately addressed through an activity level plan (either a separate Cultural Resource Management Plan, or Recreation Area Management Plan that included cultural resource management direction).

The PRMP allocates the historic sites in Keyesville “conserve for future use until such time as stabilization and restoration work allows for public use” for interpretation and education (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.4 – Cultural Resource Management). These allocations in combination with the recreation management decisions for this area would further protect cultural resources (Chapter 4, Section 4.4 – Cultural Resource Management).

BLM policy and regulations require that Native American tribes are consulted prior to any action or authorization which could impact places of traditional or religious importance to them. This is affirmed in the PRMP in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.4 – Cultural Resource Management, under both goals and objectives for all proposed management actions, that the BLM will “(I)dentify places of religious and cultural importance to Native Americans. The BLM actively coordinates and engages in consultation with all federally recognized tribes and many non-recognized tribes for any action that may affect Native American sites and values.

5.5.5 *Lands with Wilderness Characteristics*

5.5.5.1 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should adopt Alternative B with regard to lands managed for wilderness characteristics. Specifically, Public Proposal IV which the DRMP identified as not possessing wilderness characteristics. The legal description provided for this proposal includes private property that has been actively ranched for over 100 years. This parcel should be permanently removed from any future Wilderness Character Assessment Reviews and Inventories.

Comment Source(s): 208-2

Response: As a public proposal it is important to ensure there is a clear tie between the areas analyzed and those proposed; in this case the legal description provided in the public scoping comment. Although the legal description provided was broad enough to include non-federal ownership the wilderness characteristics inventory only addressed the public lands in this area. A footnote has been added to these legal descriptions stating “Inventory/Assessment addresses only public lands within this area”

The process used to establish the presence, or lack thereof, wilderness characteristics follows that outlined by agency policy and guidance. In the case of Public Proposal IV the public lands were found not to possess wilderness characteristics. The parcel cannot, however, be permanently removed from “reviews and inventories” as the FLPMA requires the BLM to keep current resource inventories on all public lands under its jurisdiction, including wilderness characteristics.

5.5.5.2 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the intact, connected landscape that encompasses the Tehachapi parcels of public land which exemplifies the wilderness characteristics that the DRMP claims to protect (Section 2.2.5). These areas, with infrequently traveled jeep trails and low impact grazing, are wild, ‘unfragmented’ and continue to exist as they have for centuries. Ensuring these parcels remain undeveloped, wild and intact is essential to preserving the habitat linkages and biodiversity of the Tehachapis.

Comment Source(s): 217-4

Response: The Tehachapi parcels of public lands, which although may appear to have wilderness like qualities, do not meet the specific requirements for possessing wilderness characteristics as outlined in agency policy and guidance. Chapter 3, Section 3.5 – Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Section describes these requirements. Specifically the Tehachapi parcels did not meet the size requirements (even when considered with surrounding lands, which must be protected in a similar fashion) or appear to be roadless in nature (as confirmed by public comments).

5.5.6 Paleontological Resources**5.5.6.1 Comment (paraphrased):**

The RMP should include the concept set forth by the International Society of Vertebrate Paleontology, that the best place for significant fossils is in a museum repository, not weathering at the outcrop. Furthermore, the RMP should clarify the circumstances under which fossils are deposited in a museum repository, including that all vertebrate and uncommon invertebrate fossils collected under permit should be deposited in such a location. Throughout the RMP any reference to specimen collection or data recovery should be followed by the phrase “and deposited in a museum repository”.

Comment Source(s): 139-1, 139-13, 139-25, 139-34

Response: The text of the PRMP/FEIS has been changed in response to this concern (Chapter 3, Section 3.6 – Paleontological Resources).

5.5.6.2 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP indicates the several areas of paleontological resources are subject to ‘direct management’ but does not describe this ‘direct management’. The RMP should clarify ‘direct management’ through the inclusion of pro-active mutual assistance with volunteer paleontologists, site stewardship programs and cyclic prospecting and inventory. It should be noted that closure and restricted access to paleontological resource sites does not protect or preserve the resource. Fossils left in place are subject to natural weathering process which can degrade them over time. Furthermore, the RMP should expand its management options beyond those associated with project specific actions to include pro-active management, including permitting prospecting, inventory and stewardship programs.

Comment Source(s): 139-2, 139-3, 139-7, 139-8, 139-9, 139-11, 139-12, 139-42, 140-3

Response: The PRMP has been modified to clarify the phrase “subject to direct BLM management” meaning under the jurisdiction of the BLM (Chapter 3, Section 3.6 – Paleontological Resources).

5.5.6.3 Comment (paraphrased):

The inventory of paleontology formations associated with the DRMP is incomplete. Decision should not be made with an incomplete inventory. The following areas should be considered in the RMP: Kern River Formation, McKittrick tar seeps, Caliente Formation, Quatal Formation, Peace Valley/Hungry Valley Formation, and Round Mountain Silt. The omission of these fossiliferous formations from the inventory strongly suggests the need to develop a surface/subsurface Paleontological Sensitivity Map to be used in land use planning. Furthermore, the RMP should clarify how current impacts to these resources are addressed.

Comment Source(s): 139-14, 139-15, 139-16, 139-17, 139-18, 139-19, 139-20, 139-28, 139-31, 140-1

Response: The PRMP has been modified to address this concern and includes revised tables that provide a more thorough listing of formations with known paleontological sensitivity within the Decision Area. This table also includes revised PFYC designations for these formations based upon the best available information regarding the known and inferred potential occurrence of significant fossils. A Paleontological Resources: PFYC 4 & 5 Formations Map for the Planning Area (Map 3.6.1) has also been included.

5.5.6.4 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP does not identify any PFYC Class 5 locations in its inventory of paleontological formations. The RMP should clarify why the Maricopa tar deposit; Round Mountain silt bone beds; and the Kern River formation were not classified as PFYC Class 5.

Comment Source(s): 139-21, 139-22, 139-22, 140-2

Response: The PRMP has been modified to address this concern and the Round Mountain silt bones beds and the Kern River formation are classified as PFYC Class 5 (Chapter 3, Section 3.6 – Paleontological Resources).

5.5.6.5 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should identify the documentation supporting the claim that unregulated casual collection of agates has resulted in damage and destruction of paleontological resources in the Sand Canyon-Cache Creek locality (page 241). If no documentation exists a decision to close the area in the RMP is not warranted. Furthermore, the RMP should use consist naming to describe the Sand Canyon-Cache Creek (Horse Canyon) area. If a closure were enacted how would paleontological research be address in the area?

Comment Source(s): 134-07, 139-24, 139-29, 139-31, 139-37, 139-38, 139-39, 139-40,

Response: The PRMP has been modified to remove the inference that paleontological resources are being impacted in the Sand Canyon-Cache Creek locality (Horse Canyon) (Chapter 3, Section 3.6 – Paleontological Resources). The area, however, still remains closed due to sensitive cultural resources (Chapter 3, Section 3.16 – ACECs).

5.5.6.6 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The analysis as it related to paleontological resources in the RMP should be expanded to include a parcel specific subsurface/surface basis.

Comment Source(s): 139-24

Response: It is beyond the scope of the RMP to provide detailed assessments of potential impacts to paleontological resources based upon parcel specific locations.

5.5.6.7 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should ensure the term “special management” (page 448) should be defined as it relates to paleontological resource. This definition should include public education and site stewardship programs.

Comment Source(s): 139-35, 139-36, 139-41

Response: The term “special management” relates to the management attention given to areas designated as ACECs and does not relate to any management provided to paleontological resources unless they constitute to the values of the ACEC.

5.5.6.8 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should provide a definition of ‘significant paleontological resources’ based on the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology guidelines.

Comment Source(s): 139-5

Response: The PRMP includes clarification of what constitutes significant paleontological resources as defined by federal regulation and BLM policy regarding the management of paleontological resources (Chapter 3, Section 3.6 – Paleontological Resources).

5.5.6.9 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP does not identify any paleontological collecting sites. The RMP should identify the Kettleman Hills area as a place for common invertebrate collecting. This area has common invertebrate paleontological resources suitable for collection. Access to most of the public land in the Kettleman Hills area is controlled by Chevron Oil Company. As such, the RMP should provide for the development of agreement with Chevron for permitting public access to the public lands that have common invertebrate fossils.

Comment Source(s): 134-08

Response: The identification of paleontological collecting sites and the establishment of access agreements are outside the scope of the RMP. Furthermore the public lands in the Kettleman Hills area have no legal public access and it would therefore be inappropriate to direct the public to this location.

5.5.7 Soil Resources

5.5.7.1 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP, Appendix L, Section L.3.3, bullet item 14 requires actions that are not always feasible in emergency situations. This SOP should be changed in the RMP to read: *“To the greatest extent possible, avoid soil-disturbing activities during periods of run-off or when soils are wet and muddy, in order to minimize damage.”*

Comment Source(s): 236-5

Response: The BLM recognizes that implementing Best Management Practices (BMP) or Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) may not be feasible in emergency situations. Appendix L, Best Management Practices/Standard Operating Procedures includes a sampling of measures for minimizing environmental effects of authorized activities on public lands. As described in the PRMP Appendix L, Section L.1 - Introduction the authorized officer is not limited to utilize those measures presented in this appendix, nor is there any commitment to use the specific wording.

5.5.8 Water Resources

5.5.8.1 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP fails to take a hard look at impacts to water resources. Specifically, the DRMP (page 469) provides no information to explain how much fencing is required to implement the livestock exclusion from all public lands as proposed under Alternative D. Furthermore, what the potential level of soil disturbance would be as a result of installing this fencing, nor how the

potential risk from a one-time action of building fences outweighs the benefits of ending the stream bank and soil erosion conferred by fencing out the livestock.

Comment Source(s): 253-10

Response: The PRMP has been modified to address the concern amounts of fencing required to implement Alternative D (Chapter 4 – General Assumptions for Analysis). Furthermore, the PRMP has been modified to include additional analysis on the impacts to water resources (Chapter 4, Section 4.9.5 – Water Resources).

5.5.8.2 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should incorporate the most current and up-to-date evaluation of drinking water resources, recharge areas, aquifer sensitivity, wellhead protection areas and source water protection zones, and describe potential impacts to these resources. This analysis will maximize the ability to determine where leasing stipulations and/or mitigation and monitoring measures are needed to protect current and future drinking water resources.

Comment Source(s): 261-22, 261-23, 261-24

Response: The PRMP has been modified to address this concern to include additional information on the status and trends of groundwater resources in the Planning Area has been added (Chapter 3, Section 3.9 – Water Resources). Furthermore, additional analysis has been added to Chapter 4, Section 4.9 – Water Resources to discuss impacts on these resources. While the PRMP does not include leasing stipulations for direct protection of ground water resources, mitigation and monitoring measures would be implemented at the site-specific level; examples of which are identified in Appendix L – Best Management Practices and Standard Operating Procedures.

5.5.8.3 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The DRMP provides insufficient information regarding mitigation measures and monitoring that would be employed to protect groundwater resources. The RMP should provide additional information on the implementation of existing guidelines, including Conditions of Approval, for groundwater resource protection, to allow for an assessment of the adequacy of these guidelines. Furthermore, the RMP should describe the types of monitoring and/or measures that will be implemented for the protection of groundwater from oil and gas activity and the circumstances under which these will be applied.

Comment Source(s): 261-25, 261-26, 261-27, 261-31

Response: The requested information is beyond the scope of this broad scale RMP and would be addressed in site-specific NEPA analysis for individual projects. For clarity, however, Chapter 3, Section 3.9 – Water Resources has been amended to include information regarding the MOU between the BLM and the California State Water Resources Control Board for Planning and Coordination of Nonpoint Source Water Quality Policies and Activities that clarifies each agency's responsibilities related to nonpoint source water quality issues and activities. In addition, examples of the mitigation measures and monitoring that would be employed to

protect surface and groundwater resources can be found in Appendix L – Best Management Practices and Standard Operating Procedures.

5.5.8.4 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should list the BMPs that may be required to protect groundwater resources as oil and gas development proceeds. Consideration should be given to using the BMPs developed for Wyoming's Pinedale Anticline oil and gas field in response to monitored groundwater contamination. Furthermore, the RMP should identify circumstances under which the BMPs would be applied (e.g., wetlands, shallow water aquifers, proximity of water wells), and an explanation of how BMPs would be monitored and enforced.

Comment Source(s): 261-28, 261-29, 261-30

Response: Appendix L of the PRMP presents a sampling of best management practices, standard operating procedures and other measures for minimizing environmental effects of various authorized activities on public lands. The authorized officer is not limited to the measures listed in Appendix L, nor is there any commitment to use the specific wording presented. Feasibility, application and specific wording will be determined based on site-specific conditions to meet resource objectives for specific management actions. The application of BMPs is determined at the project level based on site-specific NEPA analysis of the proposed action.

5.5.8.5 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should include the requirement for monitoring to occur in private wells within one mile of an oil and gas project area (the BLM Pinedale Anticline project and the U.S. Forest Service Eagle Prospect project are examples of projects for which similar monitoring programs have been established). Furthermore, the RMP should include the commitment that future project-level NEPA analyses for oil and gas development will contain a specific comprehensive monitoring plan and program to track groundwater impacts as drilling and production operations occur.

Comment Source(s): 261-32, 261-33

Response: The requested action is beyond the scope of this broad scale RMP and would be addressed at the project level. For clarity the PRMP has been modified to describe the existing monitoring network and ongoing studies of groundwater impacts occurring with the regard to oil and gas development (Chapter 3, Section 3.9 – Water Resources). Furthermore, information regarding the BLM's MOU with the State Water Resources Control Board has been included to clarify each agency's responsibilities related to nonpoint source water quality issues and activities. The BLM will determine in partnership and through the continued development of a Water Resources Management Plan, the need for additional groundwater monitoring as it pertains to federal oil and gas development.

5.5.8.6 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The DRMP fails to analyze the potential impacts to groundwater resources in areas where hydraulic fracturing may occur. The RMP should include all measures to ensure groundwater

resource protection from hydraulic fracturing, and describe any steps necessary to ensure these measures are incorporated into permits and approvals.

Comment Source(s): 261-36, 261-37

Response: The PRMP has been modified to include specific information regarding hydraulic fracturing in the Decision Area and the current authorities of the BLM and DOGGR (Chapter 3, Section 3.14 – Minerals Management). The measures to ensure groundwater protection is provided for in regulation (43 CFR 3160) and Onshore Oil and Gas Orders 1-7; a discussion of these is provided in Chapter 3, Section 3.9 – Water Resources.

5.5.8.7 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should identify any potential future requirements applicable to operators for gathering information on water quality and depth of useable groundwater, and subsequently complying with protective requirements, as appropriate.

Comment Source(s): 261-38

Response: Information required of operators would be established based on the specific project and site-specific analysis needs, and is therefore beyond the scope of this broad scale RMP. The measures to ensure groundwater protection is provided for in regulation (43 CFR 3160) and Onshore Oil and Gas Orders 1-7; a discussion of these is provided in Chapter 3, Section 3.9 – Water Resources. These measures would be included in the document authorizing the activity as Conditions of Approval.

5.5.8.8 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should clarify the extent of surface waters within the Planning Area. Volume 2, section 4.9 states that surface water resources are "not notably extensive" in the Planning Area, and directs the reader to Volume 1, Figure 3.13 for reference. This map, which shows major drainages in the Planning Area, is not an accurate portrayal of surface waters that should be considered when assessing potential impacts. Given the size and topography of the Planning Area, there is considered to be, extensive perennial, intermittent, and ephemeral drainages that qualify as waters of the U.S. and waters of the state and that warrant consideration and protection under the RMP. Furthermore, the DRMP lists vernal pools and other ephemeral waters as upland habitats in the Biological Resources sections, and excludes them from the Water Resources sections. These inaccurate statements and maps need to be corrected

Comment Source(s): 261-39, 261-40, 261-41

Response: The PRMP has been revised to clarify the extent (mileage) of perennial, intermittent, and ephemeral waters on public lands (Chapter 3, Section 3.9 – Water Resources). Furthermore, the map depicting this has been updated (Map 3.9.1).

The Biological Resources section addressed vernal pools and riparian areas as specific habitats, whereas the Water Resources section addresses perennial, intermittent, and ephemeral water courses in their entirety without reference to specific habitat types, which is not needed to understand the impacts to these resources.

5.5.8.9 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should discuss and incorporate protections for ephemeral/intermittent waters.

Comment Source(s): 261-42

Response: The PRMP address this concern (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.9 – Water Resources). Furthermore, BMPs and SOPs for the protection of water resources are included in Appendix L.

5.5.8.10 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should specifically discuss what measures can or cannot be taken (if outside its jurisdiction) to address chloride and sodium discharges from the Santa Margarita Reservoir.

Comment Source(s): 261-43

Response: The PRMP has been modified to clarify to explain that discharges from the Santa Margarita Reservoir are outside the authority of BLM Chapter 3, Section 3.9 – Water Resources).

5.5.8.11 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should include a preliminary assessment of wetland jurisdiction and explain that jurisdiction will be determined in future project-specific EAs/EISs. Furthermore, in the absence of a current National Wetlands Inventory for the full Planning Area, the RMP should include an inventory of aquatic resources, characteristics, functions and overall ecological health. Having such an inventory will provide greater wetland and riparian area protection in the Planning Area by providing information that can be used when authorizing surface disturbance or planning mitigation for unavoidable impacts to wetlands. As preparation of such an inventory may take time, the RMP should explain how this undertaking would occur.

Comment Source(s): 261-44, 261-45, 261-46, 261-47, 261-48, 261-49

Response: The assessment of wetland jurisdiction is outside the authority of BLM. Draft guidance defining “waters of the United States” has been recently released by the Army Corp of Engineers and has exerted jurisdiction over adjacent wetlands. The PRMP has been modified to include information on this guidance (Chapter 3, Section 3.9 – Water Resources).

A Planning Area-wide inventory of aquatic resources does not exist; however, it is not required for the authorized officer to make a reasoned choice between the alternatives. When authorizing surface disturbance and determining the application of BMPs and SOPs, aquatic resources would be addressed through site-specific inventory and analysis.

5.5.8.12 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should consider whether any high value wetland or riparian area would warrant protection through a No Surface Occupancy stipulation and integrate such protections.

Comment Source(s): 261-50

Response: The PRMP identifies priority plant community and habitats which include riparian areas and wetlands (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2 – Biological Resources). The PRMP also establishes a No Surface Occupancy stipulation that would be applied to minimize or eliminate adverse effects on unique or significant natural and cultural resources (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.14 – Minerals Management). While the PRMP specifically identifies four ACECs as subject to this stipulation, other areas with unique or significant natural and cultural resources would also be identified during site-specific analysis at the leasing stage.

5.5.9 Comprehensive Trail and Travel Management

5.5.9.1 Comment (paraphrased):

The Comprehensive Trail and Travel Management goal, as stated on page 64, requires a qualifying statement to be added to temper the words “access and recreational opportunities” with words that recognize only appropriate and permitted public access would be granted, especially on private land and roads.

Comment Source(s): 263-2

Response: The goal statement in the PRMP (Chapter 2, section 2.2.11 – Comprehensive Trail and Travel Management) has been modified to read “Improved access to, and recreational opportunities on, public lands that complement the character of each geographic zone and the surrounding regions”. This should ensure the reader will understand its application is only applicable to public lands.

5.5.9.2 Comment (paraphrased):

Within the Horse Canyon area the RMP should provide direction to improve/maintain vehicular access to rock collecting locations (e.g., agate beds) and mining claims as these areas are currently, and have been, used for decades.

Comment Source(s): 9-2, 13-3, 24-3, 121-1, 134-1, 197-1

Response: The improvement/maintenance of routes is outside the scope of this broad scale RMP and would be addressed at a project-specific planning level (for example, access to mining claims would be considered with the submittal of a mining Notice of Plan of Operations or application for a right-of-way). There is currently, however, no legal public access to the rock collecting location within the Horse Canyon area: Legal public access is only gained through either direct access off a State or County road, or through acquisition of a public easement across private property.

5.5.9.3 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP fails to adequately describe the impacts on access to mineral collecting sites, mines and mining claims that may be used by gem and mineral societies/collectors as a result of the proposed travel management network. Closure of these routes effectively closes mines and mineral collecting sites as often they are located miles from any roads identified within the

Travel Management Plan. The analysis of these impacts should address the use of motorized vehicles, the distances of these sites from motorized routes, and Accessibility concerns.

Comment Source(s): 9-4, 134-1, 134-2

Response: The PRMP analyzes the impacts of the route designations for the routes identified on the route inventory. The inventory used in the RMP process represents the best available information, and included ample opportunity for the public, including gem and mineral societies/collectors, to review the available information and provide additional information/missing routes. Use of any routes not in the inventory is considered cross-country travel and is therefore illegal for motorized and mechanized modes of transport. Should a route accessing these areas of interest be identified it should be brought to the attention of the BLM to receive an appropriate designation through site specific analysis as described in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.11 – Comprehensive Trail and Travel Management).

As stated in the response to Comment 5.5.12.2, no inventory of mineral collecting sites, mines or mining claims used by gem and mineral collecting societies/individuals exists. That said, however, specific information regarding access to the sites identified through the public comment process has been included in the Appendix G and summarized in the analysis (Chapter 4, Section 4.15 – Recreation and Visitor Services).

5.5.9.4 *Comment (paraphrased):*

For clarity, the “Authorized” designation proposed for route segment numbers 2626 and 2630, which provide access to the Sandy Flat area within The Dam RMZ, should be specifically defined as to what is authorized.

Comment Source(s): 17-1, 18-1, 215-10, 227-3

Response: The PRMP has been modified to designated route segments numbers 2626 and 2630 as Motorized – Street Legal Only (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.11 – Comprehensive Trail and Travel Management). This does not change the impact of the original designation but does fully explain its intent.

5.5.9.5 *Comment (paraphrased):*

OHV use within the proposed Keyesville SRMA has and will continue to cause detrimental environmental effects and aggravation to private landowners in the area. The OHV users ride off of designated trails, resulting in route proliferation, ignore “private property no trespassing” signs, and operate OHV equipment that violates noise regulations. The only viable solution is to increase appropriately trained law enforcement presence and prosecute violators to the full extent of the law.

Comment Source(s): 213-2, 214-1, 214-2

Response: The RMP proposes an increased level of management in the Keyesville SRMA in order to achieve the stated objectives (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.15 – Recreation and Visitor Services). The allocation of personnel (Law Enforcement Officers) is beyond the scope of the RMP and therefore not specifically addressed.

5.5.9.6 Comment (paraphrased):

The proposed travel network within the Keyesville SRMA does not provide suitable trails for use by sandrails, which are too powerful and destructive. These vehicles should be prohibited to maintain the integrity of the trails within the SRMA.

Comment Source(s): 214-3

Response: The route designations in the RMP make only broad level determinations as to whether a route would allow motorized use, non-motorized use, or non-mechanized use. Specific restrictions on the types of vehicles allowed to travel on specific routes would be addressed in an activity level plan for the Keyesville SRMA.

5.5.9.7 Comment (paraphrased):

The single track reroute from Fence Line trail to the end of Keyesville Classic trail (GPS data provided in public comment) will keep mountain bike and trail bikes from using Pearl Harbor Drive and mixing with street legal vehicles. This will improve safety and minimize conflicts with road vehicles as desired under 43 CFR 8340.0-2. The reroute also provides the single track experience people who are riding the Keyesville Classic single track are looking for. The Keyesville Classic annual mountain bike race would also use the new route thereby avoiding large numbers of non-motorized users on Pearl Harbor Drive as well as providing a better single track experience on the reroute. The RMP should designate this reroute as open to trail bike, mountain bike, equestrian and hiker for single track use.

Comment Source(s): 227-6

Response: The GPS route information included with the public comment has been verified on the ground and added to the route inventory. The route has been designated motorized in the PRMP (Travel Management Network Map B1). Information regarding the single track nature of the route will be carried forward into activity level planning for the Keyesville SRMA.

5.5.9.8 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should prioritize the acquisition of a legal easement across private property for the Rocky Gorge and Tombstone Ridge trails. These trails are important as they provide the only two shuttle routes for downhill mountain-biking within Keyesville. Furthermore, modifications to these routes should be made in conjunction with the SSFTA and Keyesville Classic event organizers to keep these routes open from Keyesville Road.

Comment Source(s): 227-7

Response: The PRMP has been modified to include text addressing access across private property for these trails. (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.11 – Comprehensive Trail and Travel Management).

5.5.9.9 Comment (paraphrased):

A portion of the Vista del Lago Trail was not included in the RMP's route inventory (GPS data provided in public comment). Since this route provides truly incredible views as well as

technical challenge it should be designated as open to trail bike, mountain bike, equestrian and hikers for single track use. Furthermore, coordination with the Sequoia National Forest should occur to increase the value of this trail through greater connectivity to other trails. If connectivity with Forest Service trails is not possible, then the route should run from its eastern most point up to Second Street, as the terrain is well suited.

Comment Source(s): 227-8

Response: The GPS route information included with the public comment has been added to the route inventory. The route has been designated motorized in the PRMP (Travel Management Network Map B1). Information regarding the single track nature of the route will be carried forward into activity level planning for the Keyesville SRMA. At this time no coordination regarding this specific trail has occurred with the Forest Service, but it is hoped this would occur during the development the activity level plan for this area.

5.5.9.10 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should provide direction that allows the rerouting of the Keyesville Classic trail across the now defunct Pearl Harbor Memorial (map provided in public comment). This reroute would provide for a more continuous single track experience and also address a current issue of trail widening.

Comment Source(s): 227-9, 227-10, 230-2

Response: The information regarding the reroute has been incorporated in the route inventory. The PRMP designates the reroute as motorized (Travel Management Network Map B1) and the Final EIS provides the analysis of impacts. Upon signature of the ROD maintenance may occur on the route to improve it to the appropriate standard.

5.5.9.11 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP proposed to close trails on in the vicinity of Calf Canyon Truck Trail and limit this trail to authorized use only. There appears to be no rationale for this decision, as public use of this area has not been an issue and many adjacent land owners utilize this area and these trails for hiking, horseback riding, and hunting. A recent private acquisition of 200 acres adjacent to Highway 58 and Highway 229 could provide future general public access to the area.

The terrain is steep, hilly “badlands” covered with sooty “chamise” brush that is nearly impassible. This area of BLM land is relatively close to the towns of Santa Margarita and Atascadero, yet there are very few adjacent residences. These routes make up a trail network that allows travel around the area. If access becomes available these routes would be used by hunters, hikers and variety of outdoor enthusiasts.

Existing San Luis Obispo County zoning restrictions and the lack of public access are presently adequate to protect routes in this area from unauthorized use. Designating these routes “closed” merely imposes another set of restrictions that will require additional environmental analysis should this area become available for use in the future. Motorized use of routes in this area would require a General Plan Amendment by San Luis Obispo County.

The RMP should identifies these trails; 992, 993, 994, 996, 998, 1000, 1001,1002,1006,1007, 1011, 1012, 1013,1014,1015,1018, and 1019, as “motorized”. – add additional information from CORVA letter

Comment Source(s): 226-19, 228-1, 228-8, 271-1

Response: The PRMP has been modified to allow Motorized use of Calf Canyon Truck Trail to continue to allow for recreational access to the area. The routes stemming from this road to private property are proposed to remain closed to reduce opportunities for the spread of noxious weeds (Yellow Star Thistle), protect special status plant species and reduce opportunities for Wildland fire ignitions resulting from motorized vehicle use.

The area remains open to the specific activities requested in the public comments, hiking and horseback riding are permitted cross-county on all public lands unless otherwise closed.

Routes within this area would be re-evaluated should the proposed changes to the County zoning restrictions and the public access be granted. This would allow for the development of a sustainable trail system, addressing the concerns identified above.

5.5.9.12 Comment (paraphrased):

In the analysis of impacts from route designations DRMP fails to take into account that as routes are closed use does not diminish, but does, however, occur in a more concentrated pattern on those routes left open (i.e., more miles travel on less routes). Furthermore, this may have undesirable impacts on air quality as more concentrated use may result in greater amounts of dust and other emissions.

Comment Source(s): 17-1, 20-1, 266-1, 266-2, 266-3, 270-5

Response: The analysis provided in the PRMP concerning route closures and the concept of more concentrated use patterns, has been augmented with additional information in the following sections: Chapter 4, Section 4.1 – Air and Atmospheric Values, Section 4.7 – Soil Resources, Section 4.11 – Comprehensive Trail and Travel Management, and Section 4.15 – Recreation and Visitor Services.

5.5.9.13 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should recommend that all areas and trails located within the California Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources (DOGGR) Oilfield Boundaries be considered to be "Authorized Use" only consist with the proposal made in Alternative B. Active oilfields could present risks to the general public and those untrained in safety requirements for oil and gas operations. These risks could include exposure to high temperature piping and equipment, as well as potential exposure to natural gas, crude oil, and hydrogen sulfide gas. Furthermore, designating these trails as ‘open’ or ‘limited’ would complicate enforcement and potential increase already high rates of rural crime.

Comment Source(s): 206-2, 236-1, 243-2,

Response: The PRMP provides for complete closure of some public lands to the public to address human health and safety concerns presented by heavily industrialized areas (Chapter 2, section 2.2.15 – Recreation and Visitor Services). These closures occur based on the density of infrastructure related to oil and gas production. These high densities are not typical for the entire DOGGR Oilfield Boundaries and, therefore, complete closure is neither necessary nor appropriate. Furthermore, in consideration of the lack of specific documentation identifying the need for an “Authorized” designation for all routes within the DOGGR Oilfield Boundaries but outside the areas of complete public closure, it has been determined this designation does not fully address either the desires of the authorized users or that of the general public; therefore the proposed plan alternative of the PRMP has been modified.

5.5.9.14 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP failed to adequately address the route designation of the following trails (identified by route segment number) proposed to be closed under than preferred alternative. They should be reviewed, re-evaluated and designated “open”:

3619, 3621, 3652, 3654, 3655, 3656, 3657, 3658, 3659, 3660, 3661, 3662, 3663, 3664, 3665, 3666, 3667, 3668, 3669, 3670, 3671, 3672, 3673, 3674, 3675, 3848, 3849, 3903, 3904, 3905, 3906, 3907, 3908, 3909, 3910, 3911, 3947, 3948, 3949, 3950, 3951, 3953, 3954, 3955, 3956, 3957, 3958, 3959, 3960, 3961, 3962, 3963, 3964, 3965, 3966, 3987, 4154, 4208, 5230, 5244, 5252, 5270, 5334, 5363, 5365, 5366, 5371, 5375, 5469, 5476, 5477, 5491, 5498, 5499, 5502, 6130, 6131, 6151, 6181, 6190, 6193, 6194, 6195, 6196, 6202, 6205, 6223, 6229, 6244, 6263, 6267, 6276, 6279, 6288, 6289, 6290, 6291, 6296, 6297, 6298, 6299, 6303, 6308, 6316, 6317, 6319, 6323, 6324, 6326, 6340, 6345, 6353, 6355, 6356, 6359, 6363, 6368, 6372, 6375, 6390, 6393, 6394, 6395, 6396, 6403, 6404, 6405, 6406, 6413, 6418, 6430, 6432, 6433, 6443, 6447, 6449, 6450, 6458, 6461, 6465, 6466, 6467, 6469, 6470, 6474, 6475, 6476, 6477.

Comment Source(s): 229-7, 238-7

Response: This comment was presented as a brief request and lacks sufficient detail on which to make changes to the route designations in the PRMP. As such, the PRMP does not modify these route designations unless they are specifically address in another comment that did provide such evidence or specific route information.

5.5.9.15 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP failed to adequately address the route designation of the following trails (identified by route segment number) as these inventoried trails do not actually exist on the ground. They should be reviewed, re-evaluated and removed from the route inventory:

1311, 1325 (although a non-inventoried trail exists beside it), 4203, 6232,

Comment Source(s): 229-4, 229-5, 229-6, 229-8, 238-4, 238-5, 238-6, 238-8

Response: The GIS information for all routes mentioned above reflects a route as identified from a 2010 aerial imagery; although there is some error that has resulted in the GIS information marking the route 15-30 feet off from its actual location. This error has been corrected (Travel Management Network Map B5). In addition, as a result of on-the-ground

investigation of these routes the designation of route 4203 (a combination of erosional feature and cow trails) has been modified to Closed in the PRMP.

5.5.9.16 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should clarify the route designation of route segment number 6354 and the status of route segment number 1299.

Comment Source(s): 229-3, 229-13, 238-3, 238-13

Response: The route inventory (Appendix E) for the PRMP has been modified to clarify that segment number 6354 is a mapping error and represents the same route as 6353 that is designated Closed. In addition, route segment number 1299 is designated Motorized in the PRMP.

5.5.9.17 Comment (paraphrased):

The route inventory associated with the DRMP failed to identify a number of routes that are currently used by the public. These routes should be added to the inventory and designated “open”. The non-inventoried routes include routes that occur between, adjacent to or continue on from the following route segment numbers:

6193 – 6199, 6323 - 6145 (a trail that has been used for over 30 years), 6323 (upper half of trail missing)

Comment Source(s): 229-11, 229-14, 229-15, 229-16, 238-3, 238-11, 283-14, 283-15, 238-16

Response: These routes have been added to the inventory and designated appropriately in the PRMP (Travel Management Network Map B5).

5.5.9.18 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP fails to provide an alternative that fully addresses route designation, including using a complete inventory of trails currently in use. The RMP should review and re-evaluate the route network to ensure all existing trails are inventoried and route designations address current use patterns. The preferred alternative provides its majority of ‘open’ trails for hunting, ranching and utilities and does not give adequate consideration to the type of trails used by off-road motorcyclists.

Comment Source(s): 238-1

Response: The inventory used in the RMP process represents the best available information, and included ample opportunity for the public to review the available information and provide additional information/missing routes. It is understood that some routes may have still been missed and/or wrongly designated, should this be the case the public can identify these routes at any time and the BLM will address them for designation/redesignation in accordance with the process outlined in the PRMP (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.11 – Comprehensive Trail and Travel Management).

5.5.9.19 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should ensure that access roads within newly designated ACECs remain accessible to authorized users for the purposes of maintaining their facilities and infrastructure.

Comment Source(s): 195-1

Response: Throughout the travel management planning process existing ROW authorizations for routes have been included in the proposed route designations. These existing authorizations would continue to provide for access regardless of ACEC designations. Should a route accessing facilities and infrastructure not have a valid authorization, an authorization should be sought to ensure continued access.

Information regarding other authorizations allowing the creation and maintenance of routes such as APDs or Sundries were considered during the travel management planning process, however the information on locations of these routes is unavailable, as such errors in route designations may have occurred that will need to be rectified as they become apparent through an implementation level action following the process outlined in the PRMP (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.11 – Comprehensive Trail and Travel Management)..

5.5.9.20 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should avoid including mines, mineral collecting sites and the roads accessing them in any special/prescriptive management area or designation. Routes accessing these sites should be cherry-stemmed from such area/designation boundaries. Furthermore, miners and mineral collectors should be allowed to conduct route improvements and maintenance in order to access mines to conduct exploration or development under 3809 notices and plans or through Rights of Way authorizations.

Comment Source(s): 134-2

Response: Special designations and areas with prescriptive management are identified to address specific resources of concern that may be adversely impacts by various surface disturbing actions including mining and mineral collecting activities. As such, it is appropriate to include mines and mineral collecting sites within the designated areas so the resource of concern can be adequately managed. Furthermore, cherry-stemming routes out of these areas would reduce management effectiveness by unnecessarily dissecting areas and creating breaks in management that would be difficult to enforce and that could have adverse impacts on the resources of concern.

Miners and mineral collectors are permitted to conduct route maintenance and improvement through the authorization provided in either 3809 notices and plans, or ROW. The PRMP does not impact the items permitted under these authorizations, but does, however, further refine the level of authorization required under the 3809 regulations (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.14 – Minerals Management) and restricts the areas where ROW authorizations would be provided through identification of areas for ROW avoidance or exclusion (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.12 – Lands and Realty).

5.5.9.21 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should designate the Cyrus Canyon Trail, a portion of which was missed on the inventory (GIS information was provided with the public comment), as a non-motorized route. The terrain and slope are excellent for mountain biking and this trail has the potential to be one of the best winter rides in the region. In addition routes; 2760, 2773, 2772, 2766 should be designated 'open' in order to provide connectivity to the Cyrus Canyon Trail and a loop opportunity.

Comment Source(s): 227-43, 230-4

Response: The missing route information has been added to the Route Inventory; however the PRMP designates the entire Cyrus Canyon Trail as Closed in order to meet the ACEC objectives to protect *Mimulus shevockii* a rare, sensitive plant species (Travel Management Network Map B1). Furthermore, additional routes connecting the Cyrus Canyon Trail to the main access route have been designated Closed, apart from those needed for administrative purposes. Alternative routes may be available in the vicinity, but would require site specific analysis outside the scope of the RMP.

5.5.9.22 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should be modified to designate the following Keyesville trails as "open"; 2481, 2483, 2471, 2453, and include a route occurring between 2481 and 2444 currently missing from the inventory (GIS information included with comment). These routes allow better connectivity and trail flow for mountain bike and trail bike single track trail system. In addition these routes reduce conflicts and promote safety by keeping OHVs off Keyesville, as well as reducing conflict of single trackers with 4x4 users on the dirt roads 2479 and 2477. Furthermore, all routes associated with the Keyesville Classic and Southern California High School Cycling league events should remain open (GIS information provided).

Comment Source(s): 227-11, 227-12, 227-13, 227-14, 227-15, 227-16, 227-17, 227-18, 230-2

Response: The GPS route information included with the public comment has been added to the route inventory. The PRMP has been modified to reflect a Motorized designation for these routes (Travel Management Network Map B1). Furthermore, all routes associated with the Southern California High School Cycling league events are designated Motorized in the PRMP.

5.5.9.23 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should be modified to close trail 2490 which provides no valid use, but breaks up the system. It is an unimportant connector which encourages full size vehicles on single track

Comment Source(s): 227-19

Response: The PRMP reflects the information provided in the public comment and designates the route as Closed.

5.5.9.24 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should include two single track downhill route segments (GIS information included in comment). This would improve the downhill opportunity over the existing trails while eliminating the access issues and enhancing the area for events as well as everyday use.

Comment Source(s): 227-20, 230-3

Response: The route provided with the comment has been included in the route inventory. The route has been designated Motorized in the PRMP (Travel Management Network Map B1).

5.5.9.25 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP does not provide a designation or description for single track trails. To avoid these trails being converted to ATV trails or roads the RMP should designate existing single track trails as such and provide guidance for the appropriate signing of such routes. Failing that the RMP should provide direction for this level of designation at an implementation level both within and outside SRMAs.

Comment Source(s): 227-21, 227-22

Response: This level of detailed designation of routes within their primary route designation category (e.g., motorized routes for single track verses a full sized vehicle) requires a level of information unavailable field office wide, as such it is more appropriately handled at a smaller scale in an activity level plan, such as would be associated with the Keyesville and Temblor Range SRMAs.

5.5.9.26 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should reflect that user conflicts must be independently documented to avoid the concept of “user conflict” being exploited to the benefit of one user over another. Once user group should not be granted exclusive use based on another’s personal objections. It should be made clear in the RMP that both sides of any conflict may be negatively impacted by the preferred resolution.

Comment Source(s): 215-6, 227-24, 227-25

Response: Clarifying language has been included in the PRMP Chapter 2, Section 2.2.11 – Comprehensive Trail and Travel Management to reflect that “conflicts” must be adequately documented, rather than just perceived.

5.5.9.27 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should not include Badrock Ridge Trail in any closure regarding WSA non-impairment standard since 22 years ago the WSA was studied and determined to lack wilderness quality and be unsuitable for Wilderness designation and therefore cannot impair a quality the area does not poses. The Badrock Ridge trail is an important connector trail to access a large portion of the adjacent OHV trail system in the Piute Mountain area. Furthermore, the RMP should ensure loss of OHV opportunity on trails within WSA is adequately analyzed and loss of route mileage included figures presented in the RMP.

Comment Source(s): 227-28, 227-29, 235-5

Response: The Badrock Ridge Trail remains closed in the proposed plan alternatives of the PRMP. Although the WSA in which this trail occurs was determined by BLM to be unsuitable for Wilderness designation, the BLM is still required to manage the area under non-impairment standards until congress acts on those recommendations (BLM's Interim Management Policy for Lands under Wilderness Review (H-8550-1) I.A). BLM policy further states that mechanical transport, including all motorized devices as well as trail and mountain bikes, may only be allowed on existing ways and within "open" areas that were designated prior to the passage of FLPMA (October 21, 1976). These ways or primitive routes for motorized or mechanical use that existed at the time of the passage of FLPMA are neither grandfathered uses nor valid existing rights. It is normally presumed that these ways would "disappear" upon designation of an area as wilderness as a result of discontinued use.

The PRMP has been modified to include specific route mileages resulting for implementation of the BLM's non impairment standards in WSAs (Chapter 4, Section 4.11 – Comprehensive Trail and Travel Management).

5.5.9.28 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should be modified to keep the following trails open in the community of Weldon that provide non-street legal OHVs to connect between the two communities; 3176, 3192, 3185, 3162, and an additional route(GIS information provided in comment) not marked on the inventory. These routes reduce conflicts and promote safety by keeping OHVs off surface streets adjacent to homes.

Comment Source(s): 17-1, 227-33, 227-34

Response: The requested access routes have been designated as Motorized in the PRMP (Travel Management Network Map B1) and the missing route added to the route inventory.

5.5.9.29 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP states "Only a few developed and maintained hiking trails exist in the Bakersfield FO, as follows:" (Page 270). The statement as written infers that hiking opportunities are rare in the Bakersfield FO. The RMP should be modified to recognize the fact that hikers may enjoy all developed and maintained trails regardless of designation.

Comment Source(s): 215-8, 227-35

Response: The statement reflects the actual situation, in that only a few trails have been development and maintained solely for the purpose of serving as hiking trails. Clarifying language has been included in the PRMP Chapter 2, Section 2.2.11 – Comprehensive Trail and Travel Management and elsewhere to ensure the understanding that hiking may occur anywhere (routes and/or cross-country) unless specifically restricted, thus opportunities for hiking are extensive, but opportunities as specially developed hiking trails are few in number.

5.5.9.30 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should be modified to close the old section of route 2425 and keep the existing reroute open (GIS information provided with public comment).

Comment Source(s): 227-38

Response: The PRMP has been modified to reflect the requested change (Travel Management Network Map B1).

5.5.9.31 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP (pages 274, 484-485) should be modified to ensure public comments and input is sought on changes to area/route designations and planning decisions, except for time sensitive temporary emergency actions or where needed to meet legal requirements.

Comment Source(s): 227-9, 227-39, 227-40

Response: The PRMP has been modified to clarify the guidance on the involvement of publics during route designations modifications (Chapter 2, Section 2.11 – Comprehensive Trail and Travel Management). Furthermore, clarifying text has been added to Chapter 4, Section 4.11 – Comprehensive Trail and Travel Management further highlighting this concern.

5.5.9.32 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should be modified to include a missed route segment above the community of Squirrel Valley (GIS information provided with public comment).

Comment Source(s): 227-41

Response: The route has been added to the inventory based on the provided GIS (Appendix E).

5.5.9.33 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should continue to include direction to “restore the connectivity of the Long Valley Loop Road across private property”. This route offers important access and extensive recreation opportunity.

Comment Source(s): 215-11, 226-26, 227-42

Response: As the proposed plan alternative of the PRMP revokes the Backcountry Byway designation for this route the prioritization of construction on this is beyond the scope of this broad scale plan.

5.5.9.34 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should clarify what is meant by non-motorized routes (page 64).

Comment Source(s): 199-8

Response: The PRMP includes definitions of the terms used throughout the Comprehensive Trails and Travel Management sections in Chapter 3, Section 3.11 – Comprehensive Trail and Travel Management, the Glossary of Terms and Appendix E.

5.5.9.35 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should not identify T32S, R25E Section 35 as an OHV staging area. The area has active oil and gas operations and the identification of this area as an OHV staging area will result in undue concentration of public activity that will exacerbate safety, enforcement and rural crime issues. Furthermore, it could potentially generate enough traffic to hinder daily operations of oil and gas facilities.

Comment Source(s): 206-3

Response: The location of specific staging areas for recreational OHV activities are beyond the scope of this broad scale RMP and would be addressed in subsequent site-specific activity level plans. With regard to the specific area noted in the comment (the proposed Temblor Range SRMA), a subsequent activity level plan would address this level of detail.

5.5.9.36 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should designate the following areas “Authorized Use”; T29S-R21E Sec. 31 & 32; T29S-R22E Sec. 36; T31S-R23E Sec. 6; T31S-R22E Sec. 29; T11N-R24W Sec. 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 24; T11N-R23W Sec. 19; and T28S-R20E Sec. 9. These areas contain oil and gas leases that represent potential future mineral development opportunities. Considering the length of time and the public comment process to change route or area designations, designating “Authorized Use” now is needed to preserve leases rights. Once developed these areas would pose safety risks and enforcement issues.

Comment Source(s): 206-5

Response: The PRMP delineates travel management areas and designates off-highway vehicle management areas in Chapter 2, Section 2.11 – Comprehensive Trail and Travel Management. The OHV management area designations consist of “open”, “limited” and “closed” areas. Additionally, the PRMP closes specific public lands to the general public based on resource and human health and safety concerns (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.15 – Recreation and Visitor Services). The PRMP, however, does not make any “Authorized Use” area designations.

The areas of public closure with regard to oil and gas development are identified based on the density of wells and therefore hazardous infrastructure. Future development opportunities are currently speculative therefore public closure based on human health and safety concerns would not be appropriate at this time.

The PRMP also designates individual routes and defines limitations for travel on these routes, which include a designation for authorized use only. These are implementation level decisions, which can be made at any time through the appropriate NEPA supported decision.

The length of time or requirement for a public comment process, are not valid considerations in making these decisions. Furthermore, route and/or area designations are not needed to preserve lease rights.

5.5.9.37 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should clarify the process needed to change area and route designations. Given the extensive projected level of exploration activity that is proposed to occur in the central valley in the near future, the RMP needs to contain flexibility and a defined process to change area or route designations depending on the results of exploration activities and potential future developments. Furthermore the RMP should provide a process to expedite these determinations.

Comment Source(s): 206-6

Response: Area designations can only be changed through the land use planning process (Chapter 3, Section 3.11 – Comprehensive Trail and Travel Management). These area designations are a planning level decision and changes require either a land use plan amendment or revision, both of which require Federal Register publications and a full public comment process.

Route designations are implementation level decisions. The process for changing route designations is outlined in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.11 – Comprehensive Trail and Travel Management. The most expedient way to make these route designation changes in an oil field setting is through the submittal of a transportation network plan for an entire area of interest (oil field, lease, portion of lease, or multiple leases) rather than the individual application for each route of concern. Additional language has been added to Chapter 2, Section 2.2.11 – Comprehensive Trail and Travel Management, to clarify this process.

5.5.9.38 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should ensure routes accessing guzzlers remain open to allow for routine maintenance, specifically two routes in the Temblor area designated ‘closed’ in the DRMP (GIS information was provided in the public comment).

Comment Source(s): 212-2

Response: The PRMP has been modified to designate the routes accessing guzzlers identified in the public comment as Motorized to continue to allow access for maintenance of these improvements (Appendix E).

5.5.9.39 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should state the absolute need to coordinate travel management with the CPNM to maintain route connectivity and flow. Many (20+) routes in the proposed Urban Interface and Temblor North RMZs extend to the eastern boarder of the Carrizo Plain NM which has its own ROD & RMP and as such is beyond the scope of this RMP. Both the CPNM RMP and Bakersfield DRMP (all Alternatives) call for the Temblor Ridge Road, the majority of which lies within the CPNM, to be designated as Motorized. The stated intention of Alt. B to: develop high quality

trail system, including maintenance of many existing trail, creating additional recreation trails... (DRMP page 102) can only be realized if the overwhelming majority of the “dead-end routes” actually connect with the Temblor Ridge Road thereby allowing for multiple loop opportunities that offer users a wide variety of technical challenges.

Comment Source(s): 215-1, 228-6, 228-7

Response: The proposed plan alternative of the PRMP has been modified to address these concerns through the addition of a decision directing the coordination of travel management across the Carrizo Plain National Monument boundary to the Temblor Ridge Road.

5.5.9.40 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should ensure the acquisition of multiple legal accesses to the Temblors is a top priority. The DRMP states: “Some use of the public land is, however limited by the lack of legal public access across adjoining private lands” (DRMP page 192). The proposed Urban Interface RMZ has no legal public access and the proposed Temblor North RMZ only limited legal public access. It is imperative that each of the proposed RMZs have several permanent legal public access routes in addition to routes linking them together. The DRMP only addresses gaining access from the “Community of Taft” (DRMP page 103). Legal access should first and foremost address the needs of the local recreational users, by providing “green-sticker” access from both Maricopa and Taft. An additional access point to the Temblors North should also be considered as the area is remote and has different qualities than the Urban Interface RMZ.

Comment Source(s): 215-2, 226-14, 226-15, 226-16

Response: The PRMP adds clarifying language to Chapter 2, Section 2.2.11 – Comprehensive Trail and Travel Management regarding the prioritization of access acquisition to the Temblor area.

5.5.9.41 Comment (paraphrased):

Legal access to the proposed Temblor Range SRMA should first and foremost address the needs of the local recreational users, by providing “green-sticker” access from both Maricopa and Taft. An additional access point to the Temblors North should also be considered as the area is remote and has different qualities than the Urban Interface RMZ. It is however, recommended that only limited number of access routes is pursued to facilitate management – increase public contacts and ease enforcement.

Comment Source(s): 226-14, 226-15, 226-16

Response: The PRMP adds clarifying language to Chapter 2, Section 2.2.11 – Comprehensive Trail and Travel Management regarding the prioritization of access acquisition to the Temblor area.

5.5.9.42 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP preferred alternative (as well as alternatives C & D) reflects a one size fits all approach to route designations in the Highway 33 corridor without having relied on individual

route specific analysis. An “Authorized” designation has been applied to virtually all existing routes on BLM lands closest to Maricopa, Taft, Fellows, Derby Acres and McKittrick. It should be noted that this practice has also been utilized with the same result on BLM lands near the Lost Hills and north of Oildale. These routes have been open to the public for years, and the mineral lease holders represent that these areas pose no threat to public safety. Closing routes to public access without utilizing route specific analysis sets a terrible precedent which might well have widespread and long lasting draconian consequences negatively affecting the public’s ability to access public lands throughout the country.

Comment Source(s): 215-3

Response: The proposed plan alternative of the PRMP has been modified with regard to route designations within oil field boundaries. This modification allows for continued use of these routes by all users (i.e., motorized designation) but introduces the concept of transportation plan submittal by lessees or operators for their area(s) of concern (e.g., oil field, lease, portion of lease, or multiple leases). This allows for appropriate implementation level planning and site-specific analysis that following the guidelines presented in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.11 – Comprehensive Trail and Travel Management would require opportunities for public and other stakeholder input.

5.5.9.43 Comment (paraphrased):

Currently Keyesville Road is under Kern County jurisdiction. This road is almost totally located on contiguous BLM lands and does not access any Kern County or other public holdings. Of the road’s total mileage (3.8 miles) only 0.26 mile or 1375 feet is not fully on BLM land. It would be more effective for BLM rangers/law enforcement to patrol Keyesville Road since the BLM already manages all adjacent public lands. Management, enforcement and safety of both the Keyesville area and the Keyesville Road would be greatly streamlined and enhanced if this road were under BLM management. The RMP should provide the direction need for the BLM to seek jurisdiction of the Keyesville Road from BLM’s east boarder (RSN 2498) to its western boarder (RSN 2499) from Kern County.

Comment Source(s): 215-4, 227-5

Response: The status of the jurisdiction of Keyesville Road is outside the scope of the RMP. This concept of route jurisdiction, however, will be carried forward into future activity level planning for the Keyesville area.

5.5.9.44 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP fails to provide sufficient information to explain why single track routes with high recreational values (technical challenge) are closed in the preferred alternative.

Comment Source(s): 228-5

Response: The planning process requested information from users regarding the recreational value of routes throughout the Field Office. Where this information was provided, the recreational value of the route was considered in the route designation process. In the absence of publically provided route information the BLM used public access limitation, route

connectivity, and anecdotal staff knowledge as considerations during the route designation process. The PRMP provides the rationale for all route designations in Appendix E.

5.5.9.45 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should not legitimize OHV activity in the Temblor Range through the designation of the Temblor Range SRMA. Currently this area experiences extensive illegal OHV use and legitimizing this use will lead to an increase in illegal activity. If an SRMA is to be established, serious law enforcement competent must be included and adequate funding in place to intensively manage the area in perpetuity.

Comment Source(s): 262-2, 262-3

Response: OHV use in the Temblor Range is currently a legitimate use of these public lands. A designation as an SRMA only provides for an elevated level of management of this existing activity. The level of law enforcement and funding required are outside the scope of the RMP; however, if designated, these issues will be fully addressed in a subsequent activity level plan.

5.5.9.46 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should designate an OHV park in the Santa Monica Recreation Area or close to potential users to reduce trips from LA to Taft and lessen the smog.

Comment Source(s): 270-6

Response: The Santa Monica Recreation Area is outside the Bakersfield Field Office therefore designation of an OHV park in this area is outside the jurisdiction of the BLM and the scope of the RMP.

5.5.9.47 Comment (paraphrased):

Oil producing areas are not usually thought of as a prime location for recreation, however in some cases these areas provide recreational opportunity free from significant hazards as well as access to adjacent public lands. The DRMP expressed concerns regarding public safety in heavily developed oil fields; however detailed information regarding the specific location and nature of such hazards is not available in the document. The preferred alternative proposes closure of oil producing areas to public entry if they have a well density greater than 20 wells per 40 acres. This would result in the closure of over 11,000 acres of public lands. The oil producing companies have assured local residents that these areas pose no hazard to the public. Oil producing areas are often directly adjacent to private land holdings. An effective closure of these areas will be difficult to implement, difficult to enforce, confusing to the public and to oil company employees. The RMP should therefore evaluate only the routes in these areas and implement route closures to mitigate safety concerns on a case by case basis. Furthermore, the RMP should clarify the areas proposed for closure since map 3.30 in the DRMP indicates a relatively small area depicted in red as "heavily developed oil producing areas" which do not match the oil producing areas proposed for closure to public entry shown on the Alternative maps.

Comment Source(s): 226-8, 226-9, 226-10, 226-11

Response: The rationale for the public closure of these industrialized intensively developed areas stems from a concern for public safety in these areas. Although the oil and gas industry maintains there is no threat to human health and safety from oil and gas production, workers in these area along with BLM staff require specific training and specialized equipment to enter these areas. Specifically these areas pose threats from exposure to, high temperature piping and equipment, hydrogen sulfide gas, natural gas, and crude oil.

In these areas, complete public closure was determined to be the appropriate management tool for the protection of human health and safety, since other options, such as requiring all publics to receive the specialized training and use the required equipment (H₂S monitors, fire retardant clothing, etc.) was deemed infeasible and unenforceable.

The rationale used to determine the areas proposed closed in the PRMP results from the use of well density. Well density was used as a measure of the presence of potentially hazardous equipment i.e., as well density increase so does the density of associated piping and hazardous equipment, and therefore an indicator of the level of potential hazard to human health and safety.

5.5.9.48 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP designates a large number of canyon trails are “closed” in Alternative B, apparently due to route density considerations, the presence of cultural sites, route crossing the CPNM boundary or due to routes being located in washes. It should be noted that there is very little precipitation in this area so these trails are not prone to erosion with subsequent impacts to watershed. When a ridge top route is selected in preference to a canyon trail this selects a much less desirable route from the recreational rider’s perspective in most cases. Canyon routes must be carefully evaluated for impacts that cannot reasonably be mitigated or offset by the greater benefit they provide to the recreational user. These routes should be designated “motorized” if at all possible to assure that the system will be interesting to riders and meet the objectives set forth to create a high quality managed trail system.

Comment Source(s): 226-22, 226-23

Response: The planning process requested information from users regarding the recreational value of routes throughout the Field Office. Where this information was provided, the recreational value of the route was considered in the route designation process. In the absence of publically provided route information the BLM used public access limitation, route connectivity, and anecdotal staff knowledge as considerations during the route designation process.

The PRMP has been modified with regard to a number of canyon routes as a result of public comments provided during the public comment period. The rationale for all route designations has been included Appendix E.

5.5.9.49 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP fails to provide enough connector routes to the Ridge Road within the Temblor SRMA, thus reducing loop opportunities. The designation of six routes in the preferred alternative is inadequate to provide enough loop opportunities for a viable trail system in the

Temblors. Routes in both the Temblors and the CPNM boundary area North East of the Ridge Road should ultimately be addressed in a single Travel Management document to reduce confusion and allow development of a coordinated regional travel plan.

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: A Travel Management Plan is currently underway for the CPNM. This effort is being conducted in coordination with the route designations in the PRMP. Furthermore, with the designation of the Temblor Range SRMA a subsequent activity level plan would be developed which would further address travel management in this area.

5.5.9.50 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the following route specific information within the Temblor SRMA (GIS information included with comment);

#5469 - "Midway Peak" – This route is old ranch road that runs directly to the hill top near Midway Peak. Designated closed, it should be compared for recreational quality to adjacent route #5372. Both routes should be retained for motorized use unless a detailed analysis indicates that impacts to cultural and natural resources cannot be reasonably mitigated.

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: The PRMP designates both route numbers 5469 and 5372 as Motorized to continue to provide these recreational opportunities.

5.5.9.51 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the following route specific information within the Temblor SRMA (GIS information included with comment);

#5277 – "Mocal Connection" This route is designated for "administrative access" in Alternative B. It is an unnamed route through an oil field that provides access to Temblor trails #5278, 5345, and 5328 from Mocal Road.

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: The PRMP designates route 5277 as Motorized to continue to allow access to connected routes in the Temblor SRMA.

5.5.9.52 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the following route specific information within the Temblor SRMA (GIS information included with comment);

#5276 may be part of the county road and we question whether this should be closed to public access. Routes # 5278, 5345, and 5328 permit access to large sections of the North Temblor trail system. This is just one example of how many routes in oil fields need evaluation for the access they provide.

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: The PRMP corrects the error made in designating route 5276 and designates the route as Motorized.

5.5.9.53 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the following route specific information within the Temblor SRMA (GIS information included with comment);

5476 A (unclassified trail not on inventory) "XX" – This trail connects #5476 ("S&T trail") to the Ridge Road. This is an advanced level trail that is incredibly steep so it is usually ridden downhill and not used as a hill climb. The trail appears to have had little recent use, probably because of its extreme difficulty. There are very few trails on the system that are of this level of difficulty. At the bottom of this hill the grade flattens out to become a high quality single track canyon trail.

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: The route has been added to the route inventory based on the GIS provided and designated Motorized in the PRMP.

5.5.9.54 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the following route specific information within the Temblor SRMA (GIS information included with comment);

#5476 – "S&T" – This is an intermediate level single track canyon trail unique to the immediate area. It has very tight turns because of the steep canyon walls. It connects with the Ridge Road via an old ranch road which is not very steep. This route does not have a steep gradient therefore more maintainable than some other canyon trails.

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: Route number 5476 has been designated Motorized in the PRMP.

5.5.9.55 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the following route specific information within the Temblor SRMA (GIS information included with comment);

#5351 – This trail appears to be a short hill climb which is designated motorized in Alternative B. There may be other unclassified hill climbs in the area. This hill climb and possibly others in the area should be designated as 60 ft wide trails to encourage riders to confine hill climbing activity to locations where they can be maintained.

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: Route number 5351 is a trail over 1.3 miles in length, it is designated Motorized in the PRMP. It may include a portion of a hill climb, however the specific of the width of

designation of this and other such features are outside the scope of the RMP and would be investigated at an activity level planning stage.

5.5.9.56 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the following route specific information within the Temblor SRMA (GIS information included with comment);

#5501 A – (unclassified route not on inventory) “XXX” - This is an intermediate level route that runs up a valley to connect #5501 and #5482. It is an interesting trail to ride because it twists and turns to match the terrain. It has a rock step up features that add to the challenge and make the route appealing.

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: The route has been added to the route inventory based on the GIS provided and designated Motorized in the PRMP.

5.5.9.57 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the following route specific information within the Temblor SRMA (GIS information included with comment);

#5496 A - (unclassified route not on inventory) – “X-Pipe” – This route starts at #5501 and ends at #5498. It is a more technically challenging single track than the adjacent routes that runs up a deep valley and rides like a “half pipe” on a skateboard hence the name. It goes over a rise to connect with Captain Morgan #5496.

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: The route has been added to the route inventory based on the GIS provided and designated Motorized in the PRMP.

5.5.9.58 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the following route specific information within the Temblor SRMA (GIS information included with comment);

5496 “Captain Morgan” - This is a single track trail that runs up a narrow valley, then splits to connect in two locations with the Ridge Road. There are rock step up features that are challenging. This is a prime example of a “canyon trail” found only in the Temblors that is both challenging and fun to ride because it is narrow with a twisting and turning character. It is proposed closed at the fork (#5499). We recommend both forks remain designated “motorized”. There are pioneer hill climbs near the top that may eventually require restoration.

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: Route number 5499 has been designated Motorized in the PRMP.

5.5.9.59 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the following route specific information within the Temblor SRMA (GIS information included with comment);

#4203 A (unclassified route) this trail segment potentially connects #4203, an access trail that dead ends on the map, with #6232. #4202 is the only connecting route up into the Temblors within 1.6 miles of adjacent trails and is designated motorized, but it will be a “dead end” trail without a connection at the Western end. The unclassified segment #4203A should be added to make #4203 a connected, useable trail. We request that this segment or the adjacent unclassified segment be designated as “motorized” to provide access unless a detailed study of the route reveals impacts to cultural or natural resources that cannot reasonably be mitigated.

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: Route number 4203 has been edited in the PRMP to include the missing portion connecting it to route number 6232.

5.5.9.60 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the following route specific information within the Temblor SRMA (GIS information included with comment);

#6406 – “Supercross Street” – This is a very popular technical challenge valley trail accessible from Taft. Most trails with these properties are found further up in the canyons in the North Temblors making this trail unusual for the area.

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: Route number 6406 has been designated Motorized in the PRMP.

5.5.9.61 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the following route specific information within the Temblor SRMA (GIS information included with comment);

#6393 – “Melon Head Extension”; this portion of the trail is the most direct route to connect the Ridge Road with #6402 “Melon Head. It is a ridge top trail. This route connects with an historic “two track” route that is on the USGS maps.

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: Route number 6393 has been designated Motorized in the PRMP.

5.5.9.62 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the following route specific information within the Temblor SRMA (GIS information included with comment);

#6393A This would be an alternative route to #6393. It is an unclassified lower elevation trail. At least one route through this area should be designated “motorized” to provide a connection with the rest of the system.

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: The route has been added to the route inventory based on the GIS provided and designated Motorized in the PRMP.

5.5.9.63 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the following route specific information within the Temblor SRMA (GIS information included with comment);

#4210 A (unclassified route); This is a single track trail not on inventory. It connects with #4210 and #6397. It is a very narrow trail that runs up a valley as #4210 which is a designated “motorized” but it is a “dead end” route in Alternative B. The unclassified segment connects with the designated section and then climbs out of the valley to connect with #6397. These features make it an unusual trail that is very primitive and appealing.

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: Route number 4210 has been edited in the PRMP to include the missing portion connecting it to route number 6397.

5.5.9.64 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the following route specific information within the Temblor SRMA (GIS information included with comment);

#5230 – “002” This trail is designated closed but runs along a ridge top and should not have resource concerns. It is a two track ranch road that provides access to the Ridge Road. It is not clear why this route is designated closed.

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: Route number 6393 has been designated Motorized in the PRMP.

5.5.9.65 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the following route specific information within the Temblor SRMA (GIS information included with comment);

#5230 A – An unclassified single track valley trail that twists and turns to connect with the Ridge Road. It would be preferred to #5230 because it is a more varied and interesting single track route instead of a two track road.

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: The route has been added to the route inventory based on the GIS provided and designated Motorized in the PRMP.

5.5.9.66 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the following route specific information within the Temblor SRMA (GIS information included with comment);

#6267 A – “Trail of Tears” – The mid portion of this trail was not included in the route inventory. It begins as #6267 which is designated closed and ends at #6281 that is designated open. The route continues up a valley and gains elevation to eventually reach the Ridge Road. This a technical “challenge” trail that is ridden only by expert riders.

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: The missing portion of the route has been added to the route inventory based on the GIS provided and designated Motorized in the PRMP.

5.5.9.67 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the following route specific information within the Temblor SRMA (GIS information included with comment);

#6461 – An interesting twisty trail that reaches an intersection near the CPNM boundary that is designated closed. It does not enter the CPNM unlike #6226 which is designated open. It would serve as an alternate route to #6226 but would be more interesting because it is a single track whereas #6226 is just another dirt road with no remarkable features.

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: Route number 6461 has been designated Motorized in the PRMP.

5.5.9.68 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the following route specific information within the Temblor SRMA (GIS information included with comment);

#6465 – “C-Span” – This trail is designated “closed” in Alt. B. This trail is in excellent condition. It is a favorite of the Taft Motorcycle Club. It is a good intermediate level trail that is not so steep that it is not sustainable. There are interesting rock step up features along the trail. The trail crosses the CPNM boundary and extends for a distance into the CPNM to intersect with the Ridge Road to provide a loop opportunity.

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: Route number 6465 has been designated Motorized in the PRMP.

5.5.9.69 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the following route specific information within the Temblor SRMA (GIS information included with comment);

#6340 – “Boydadilla Loop” - This loop trail is used by younger riders. There is an uninventoried accessory loop adjacent to the main loop. Named after the nearby landowner, it was built in the 1980’s as a practice track but is used now extensively for recreational riding.

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: The Temblor SRMA establishes objectives allocations specifically for non-competitive OHV recreation. Having such a loop “track” does not support these non-competitive objectives and may encourage undesirable activities within the SRMA. Within, the same area are a number of trails providing a similar riding experience that connect in loops and would be suitable for use by all riders. As such, no changes have been made to the PRMP.

5.5.9.70 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the following route specific information within the Temblor SRMA (GIS information included with comment);

#6461 – An unnamed ridge top trail with interesting technical qualities, it is almost entirely within the planning area and connects with the Ridge Road. Unlike adjacent routes it does not enter the CPNM and so it may be preferred to adjacent routes. There are hill climbs with erosion near where the trail connects with the Ridge Road that may need to be addressed. This trail should remain designated as “motorized” to provide recreational value unless a detailed study of the route reveals impacts to cultural or natural resources that cannot reasonably be mitigated.

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: Route number 6461 has been designated Motorized in the PRMP.

5.5.9.71 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the following route specific information within the Temblor SRMA (GIS information included with comment);

#6353 – This trail runs up a valley. It is a good intermediate trail due to gradual grade. Although designated “closed” in Alt. B the trail ends at an open “green” segment near the CPNM boundary. This appears to be a mapping error. This trail should be designated “open” along its entire length from near Taft until it connects with the Ridge Road. It is one of the few continuous direct routes from near Taft to the summit

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: The mapping error has been corrected and the entire length of the route designated as Motorized in the PRMP.

5.5.9.72 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the following route specific information within the Temblor SRMA (GIS information included with comment);

#6358 – This trail is one of only 6 that connect with the Ridge Road outside the CPNM boundary. Near its origin the trail ends at a closed “red” section before connecting with several other routes. This may be a mapping error, please check this and correct to allow connection of this route with the intersection so it is useable.

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: This mapping error has been corrected in the PRMP.

5.5.9.73 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the following route specific information within the Temblor SRMA (GIS information included with comment);

#6359 – This route is “red” (closed) in Alt B but does not enter the CPNM. The terrain is not steep in this area and the trail provides a beginner level experience compared to the adjacent routes. Because of reduced grade the trail is easier to maintain and more sustainable than a steeper trail.

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: Route number 6359 has been designated Motorized in the PRMP.

5.5.9.74 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the following route specific information within the Temblor SRMA (GIS information included with comment);

#3885 – “EXP” – A named trail near Taft; regularly ridden by Taft MCC, it is an interesting connecting route from Taft to the rest of the trail system. It is limited to “administrative access” under Alternative B.

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: Route number 3885 has been designated Motorized in the PRMP.

5.5.9.75 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the following route specific information within the Temblor SRMA (GIS information included with comment);

Unclassified #2 – This trail is not on the route inventory. It is an incredible single track trail that starts as an old two track ranch access road from the Ridge Road. It makes a steep descent then climbs to connect with #3827. There are spectacular views from the hill tops and breathtaking valley vistas.

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: The route has been added to the route inventory based on the GIS provided and designated Motorized in the PRMP.

5.5.9.76 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give consideration to the following route specific information within the Temblor SRMA (GIS information included with comment);

“Hill Climbs” – Located near the microwave station, but inside the CPNM, these old hill climb routes have been present for decades. Hill climbs should be designated as trails 60 feet wide and located in an area of soils where they can be maintained. Identifying a hill climb location will direct this activity toward a designated trail and reduce unwanted hill climbing in other areas. This historical location may not be desirable as it is within the CPNM boundary. If this area cannot be mitigated other suitable hill climb locations should be identified.

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: Hill climbs within the CPNM boundary are outside the scope of the RMP and would be better address in the CPNM’s Travel Management Plan. Should the Temblor Range be designated an SRMA the subsequent activity level plan could address the concept of managed hill climb areas.

5.5.9.77 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should be modified to designated the following routes as ‘open’ to avoid dead-end routes at the CPNM boundary and continue to provide loop opportunities; 5476, 5499, 5230, 6469, 6461, 6465, 6447, 6372, 6363, 6353

Comment Source(s): 226-24

Response: A Travel Management Plan is currently underway for the CPNM. This effort is being conducted in coordination with the route designations in the PRMP. Furthermore, with the designation of the Temblor Range SRMA a subsequent activity level plan would be developed which would further address travel management in this area.

5.5.9.78 Comment (paraphrased):

Although the process for designating routes of travel is described in the DRMP the specific reasons for designating individual routes within limited use areas either “motorized” or “closed” are not included. Furthermore there is an absence of information in the DRMP indicating whether or not the routes proposed “closed” in Alternative B possess recreational qualities that potentially offset impacts to natural resources. The analysis is not sufficiently detailed to allow the reader to determine whether or not impacts to cultural and natural resources and potential user conflict could be reasonably mitigated The RMP should designate routes as ‘motorized’ (specifically those address in public comments) unless sufficient evidence is documented and a thorough analysis demonstrates that the route contributes to a failure to achieve resource goals/objectives for which there is no reasonable or feasible mitigation.

Comment Source(s): 226-2, 226-3, 226-4, 226-5

Response: The rationale for all route designations has been included Appendix E. Information regarding the recreational qualities of each route is unknown and designations based on access, connectivity and anecdotal information based on field experience. Where the public has specifically commented on a route's recreational value through the public scoping and public comment processes this information has been considered and the route designation and/or analysis updated accordingly.

5.5.9.79 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should give adequate consideration of the fact that implementation level decisions set forth, such as route closures, will have a significant impact on recreational users that will potentially take years to change. Given the limited time available to conduct inventory and analysis of nearly 2000 miles of route the Field Office elected to develop the Travel Plan without considering the physical condition of the routes, suitability for use by allowable modes of transport, and ability to access the route. Although it is agreed that these factors may need to be considered at a later stage it should be pointed out that opening a closed route requires NEPA analysis with the associated surveys by resource specialists, public notice, opportunity for comment and appeal. This process is lengthy, complex, and accompanied by significant costs. In contrast closing a route can be done emergently with justification. Although this approach is intended to protect cultural and natural resources it can place recreational users at a significant disadvantage when they seek to open new routes. The RMP should leave as many routes open as possible and address resource damage, and user conflict on a case-by-case basis.

Comment Source(s): 226-6, 226-7

Response: The PRMP has been modified to in several places to ensure route designations more accurately reflect known route information. Specifically, information on routes gained throughout the public comment process has been considered in making route designations, and those routes with documented recreational values designated as motorized where no other valid resource concern exists. Should these or any route pose significant issues in the future, the process outlined in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.11 – Comprehensive Trail and Travel Management, for changing route designations would be followed.

5.5.10 Lands and Realty

5.5.10.1 Comment (paraphrased):

Public land within the Tehachapi Mountains are a set of scattered in-holdings surrounded by private property (primarily ranchlands with low-impact grazing and recreational uses), and almost no paved roads or development. Allowing these isolated parcels to be developed for wind energy projects, either through allowing utility scale renewable energy right-of-ways or making these lands available for acquisition would force major changes to the surrounding private properties and the residents' way of life. The RMP should exclude utility scale renewable energy projects, specifically wind energy, from public lands in the Tehachapi Mountains and make these parcels unavailable for acquisition.

Comment Source(s): 122-1, 123-1

Response: The PRMP addresses this issue by designating avoidance and exclusion areas for rights-of-way including utility scale renewable energy development. Any proposals received for utility scale renewable energy development and rights-of-way outside of avoidance or exclusion areas will require public involvement as well as completion of a site specific NEPA analysis, which includes a cumulative effects analysis discussing connected and reasonably foreseeable actions.

The DRMP also eliminates most public lands (those with special designations, in wildlife corridors, with important habitat and values, etc.) within the decision area from disposal. All other proposed disposals will require public involvement as well as completion of a site specific NEPA analysis which includes a cumulative effects analysis discussing connected and reasonably foreseeable actions.

5.5.10.2 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should include direction to change the name of Pearl Harbor Drive back to its original name – Jackpot Road. This change needs to occur as its namesake the Pearl Harbor Memorial (once located off this road) has been relocated to Tank Park in Lake Isabella.

Comment Source(s): 214-13

Response: This request is outside the scope of this broad scale RMP, because it is not a planning level or implementation level decision, but rather an administrative decision that requires coordination with other entities including Kern County.

5.5.10.3 Comment (paraphrased):

Considering the high likelihood of increased utility scale energy development and rights-of-way within the Lake Isabella and Tehachapi regions over the next two decades, the DRMP fails to adequately address the potential direct and indirect impacts, and how the preferred alternative would address this activity. If the RMP is to defer wind energy decisions to the outcomes of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) an amendment to the Bakersfield RMP would need to occur, the DRMP made no mention of this. The RMP should acknowledge public lands included in the Conservation Biology Institute (CBI) study area require more in-depth conservation planning before utility scale wind development or other resource uses are permitted.

Comment Source(s): 239-1, 239-3, 264-11

Response: The PRMP addresses this issue by designating avoidance and exclusion areas for rights-of-way including utility scale renewable energy development throughout the Decision Area. Any proposals received for utility scale renewable energy development and rights-of-way outside of avoidance or exclusion areas will require public involvement as well as completion of a site specific NEPA analysis, which includes a cumulative effects analysis discussing connected and reasonably foreseeable actions.

The relationship between the Bakersfield RMP and the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) has been clarified in Chapter 1, Section 1.6.2 – Relationship to BLM, Policy, Plans, and Programs. Any specific project proposals would be subject to a site-specific analysis to address resources on public lands that may be impacted.

5.5.10.4 Comment (paraphrased):

Various maps in the DRMP incorrectly represent at least a part of the CPNM boundary. On these maps, the Stubblefield Ranch property is mostly subsumed into the Monument. A provided map (commenter provided map) illustrates the correct boundary of the Stubblefield Ranch. The maps in the RMP should be modified, so that they correctly reflect current ownership in this area.

Comment Source(s): 262-4

Response: The maps in the PRMP have been reviewed and any appropriate corrections have been made.

5.5.10.5 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP states that resource specific BMPs may be applied on ROW authorizations. It is unclear whether individual projects must be submitted for prior approval and case-by-case authorization. If case-by-case authorizations are required, this stipulation has the potential to significantly slow down the project approval and construction process, which is a concern in cases of emergency or CPUC mandated activities.

Comment Source(s): 195-2

Response: The PRMP has been changed to clarify this decision (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.12 – Lands and Realty). Every request for use or occupancy of BLM managed lands requires completion of an application which is processed at the field office level. A case-by-case site specific NEPA analysis is required to process each application and to grant an authorization. BLM regulations and policy have established procedures for compliance with NEPA in emergency situations that require immediate action to protect public health or safety, property, or important resources. While a project mandated by a regulatory agency may have a higher priority over others, full NEPA compliance is still required.

5.5.11 Livestock Grazing

5.5.11.1 Comment (paraphrased):

The DEIS (pages 496 and 498) states that “new information” has emerged concerning compatibility of livestock grazing in portions of Kaweah ACEC causing the areas to be classified as Unavailable. This “new information” requires clarification if it is to be used to support the allocation decisions especially where the same rationale is used to support a different allocation in the Blue Ridge ACEC.

Comment Source(s): 199-29

Response: The PRMP has been modified to address this concern through the addition of clarifying text to Chapter 4, Section 4.13 – Livestock Grazing.

5.5.11.2 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP presents a short list of Bakersfield FO specific livestock grazing guidelines (page 98) but fails to provide an explanation of how and where these guidelines would be applied. Furthermore, three of these management guidelines do nothing more than apply the Central CA Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management, which the Bakersfield FO has had to comply with for all grazing authorizations since 1999.

Comment Source(s): 253-6

Response: The PRMP presents this decision as an explanation of “how” the guidelines are applied throughout the Decision Area to specific allotments and/or habitats/populations for certain species. When a guideline indicates that it is applying the Central CA Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management it means that there is no special livestock management beyond meeting the Standards for Rangeland Health needed for that species. This provides bases for comparisons between Alternatives in which the species specific management may change to better meet the goals and objectives of the Alternative.

5.5.11.3 Comment (paraphrased):

Remove Alternative D from consideration in the Bakersfield RMP as it does not meet with the BLM’s multiple use policy and would result in widespread economic distress.

Comment Source(s): 7-2

Response: The PRMP includes a no grazing alternative (Alternative D) in accordance with current BLM guidance.

5.5.11.4 Comment (paraphrased):

The newly acquired Richards/Edgar properties should be allocated as available for livestock grazing to reduce the density of thatch which appears to be choking out new growth at the east end of the meadow.

Comment Source(s): 23-1

Response: Any new acquisitions would be allocated to match allocations given to the surrounding or adjacent lands, except where land is unsuitable for livestock grazing or the purpose for which the land was acquired is incompatible with livestock grazing including restrictions placed on future use through acquisition documents (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.13 – Livestock Grazing).

5.5.11.5 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP fails to provide reasonable rationale for the closure to livestock grazing of the Horse Canyon ACEC under Alternative B. Livestock grazing in this area predates BLM, and with no supporting rationale the necessity for this closure requires additional clarification.

Comment Source(s): 199-13

Response: Public lands within the Horse Canyon ACEC were made unavailable for livestock grazing under the 1997 Caliente RMP. The purpose for the allocation was to protect cultural resources and values within the ACEC and is applicable to public lands within the ACEC only. The Bakersfield RMP continues that allocation for the same purpose, protection of the relevant and important values that establish the ACEC designation.

5.5.11.6 Comment (paraphrased):

In accordance with Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1) Appendix C, IIB Livestock Grazing Land Use Plan Decisions, consideration of five factors should be used when identifying lands as Available or not Available for livestock grazing. Furthermore, FLPMA requires that a basic inventory of the resources present on public lands is maintained so that a 'hard look' at the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of actions can be conducted. The DRMP fails to identify on which of the 116 allotments in the planning area "resources that may require special management or protection, such as special status species, special recreation management areas (SRMAs), or ACECs" occur. Without disclosure this inventory the adequacy of analysis of impacts is in question.

Comment Source(s): 253-5

Response: The PRMP identifies resources that may require special management through the establishment and designation of ACECs (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.17 – ACECs), SRMAs (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.15 – Recreation and Visitor Services) and the identification of areas of ecological importance (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2 – Biological Resources). Furthermore, the PRMP provides Bakersfield FO-specific livestock grazing management decisions for all areas that contain resources that may require special management or protection regardless if those resources or conditions are currently known to exist on a grazing allotment (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.13 – Livestock Grazing).

The PRMP did consider the factors presented in the Land Use Planning Handbook when making livestock grazing allocations, however, there is no requirement to present information as it relates to specific allotments at this planning level. The maps provided throughout the PRMP can be used to identify the overlap between the resources that may require special management and the livestock grazing allotments.

5.5.11.7 Comment (paraphrased):

The cumulative impacts analysis is reduced to series of generalized responses to a selective list of "issues raised in scoping" that BLM has listed in DRMP. This is simply inadequate. The cumulative effects analysis is a key component of any NEPA analysis. The RMP must analyze the cumulative effects of livestock grazing in combination with other extractive uses on all of the resources that FLPMA requires BLM to manage, including special status species, wildlife, vegetation, soils and soil crusts, riparian resources, invasive species, air quality, public safety, ACEC, wilderness quality, cultural and archeological resources, aesthetic and recreational resources, and climate change.

Comment Source(s): 253-11

Response: The PRMP describes the cumulative impacts of the proposed alternatives extractive uses in Chapter 4.24.3 – Cumulative Impacts Issue 3. This analysis is broad and encompassing of all BLM management (including livestock grazing) when considered with other reasonably foreseeable actions within the Cumulative Impact Analysis Area (CIAA). This analysis fulfills the purposes of disclosing cumulative impacts with regard to the issues raised during the scoping process (as described in Chapter 4, Section 4.24 – Cumulative Impacts) and is appropriate for this level planning.

5.5.11.8 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP analysis should reflect best science with regard to the impact of livestock grazing on Monkey Flower. Any relevant studies into these impacts should be cited. Where information is lacking studies should be completed prior to any action to close off these areas to livestock grazing. In addition the RMP should give consideration to management methods implemented by Ridgecrest and within Tulare County to balance livestock grazing with populations of Monkey Flower. The RMP should document the rationale for the removal of cattle from the area prior to the completion of supporting studies.

The BLM should also reconcile or explain the inconsistency between the DRMP and Environmental Assessment CA-160-00-0001, which stated “no new impacts would occur to Kelso Creek Monkey Flower with cattle grazing”.

Comment Source(s): 273-1, 273-2, 237-3, 273-4, 273-5

Response: The PRMP has been modified to include additional narrative describing the sensitivity of the *Mimulus shevockii* (Kelso Creek Monkey Flower) in Cyrus Canyon (Chapter 3, Section 3.16 – ACECs). The management direction provided in the PRMP is based on biological and ecological knowledge; a published paper is not required for this knowledge to be considered “best science”. Should any future scientific study be completed establishing species specific management guidelines this information would be considered in any future changes to management in areas supporting these populations.

There is no inconsistency between the PRMP and the cited environmental assessment as the environmental assessment tiered to the analysis discussed in the existing RMP. Tiering allows for the impacts to be disclosed at the Land Use Planning level and referred to in subsequent NEPA analysis as the baseline against which to measure “new” impacts from the proposed action. The cited language is only a portion of a paragraph that states

“...impacts of grazing on Kelso Creek monkeyflower were addressed in the EIS for the Caliente RMP. No new impacts would occur to Kelso Creek monkeyflower from the proposed action.”

This simply describes the fact that there are no new impacts beyond those already disclosed in the RMP.

5.5.11.9 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP fails to provide an adequate range of practical alternatives for livestock grazing. Specifically the DRMP did not consider an alternative that would exclude livestock grazing from

all sensitive areas such as Wilderness, ACEC, cultural resources, and important wildlife habitat; an alternative that would reduce total acreage grazed from 80% of the resource area to 40% of the resource area. The DRMP did not address any alternative involving reduced grazing levels. Furthermore, the DRMP did not give adequate consideration to the no grazing alternative, considering it 'impractical'.

The RMP should be revised to consider a full review of all reasonable livestock grazing alternatives. In addition it should consider retiring vacant allotments and consider a mechanism to allow for third-party buyout and voluntary relinquishment of grazing privileges from those allotments where grazing conflicts with other uses or impacts resource values.

Comment Source(s): 253-1, 253-2, 253-3

Response: The PRMP provides the rationale for the range of livestock grazing alternatives in Chapter 2, Section 2.6.4 – Alternatives Considered but not analyzed in Detail (Modified Grazing Alternative). Alternative D (no grazing) was analyzed in detail in the EIS. All appropriate environmental consequences were considered and fully analyzed.

Livestock grazing allocations (Available/Unavailable) are based on the five considerations presented in Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1) the lack of a current authorization is not one of these considerations.

Mechanisms for voluntary relinquishment are outside the scope of the RMP and provided for in BLM policy. Voluntary relinquishment of grazing preference is always allowed, however, relinquishment itself also does not warrant changing the allocation from available to unavailable for livestock grazing without a resource concern which makes livestock grazing an incompatible use of the lands where rangeland health standards cannot be achieved under any level or management of livestock use.

5.5.11.10 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should reflect that a prohibition on livestock grazing for the protection of the Tehachapi slender salamander populations is unnecessary. Healthy populations of salamanders continue to live in Caliente Creek drainage, as well as further south on the Tejon Ranch, where they have successfully co-existed with active grazing operations for over a century. This healthy coexistence demonstrates the fact that prohibiting grazing is not necessary to ensure their continued survival.

Comment Source(s): 217-8

Response: The proposed plan alternative in the PRMP does make these areas unavailable for livestock grazing; however specific livestock management guidelines may be applied to ensure grazing use is compatible with the objectives for special status species and riparian resource.

5.5.11.11 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should be modified to remove cattle from the Keyesville area. The Keyesville area is too small to handle the impact the cows are having on the ecosystem.

Comment Source(s): 214-15

Response: This request lacks sufficient detail on which to base any changes to livestock grazing in the Keyesville area. In the last assessment the area was meeting all standards for rangeland health (Appendix F-3A - Waggy Flat, #00090).

5.5.11.12 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should include a description of the protection measures and management actions to facilitate the recovery and protection of riparian and wetland areas that are functioning at risk in a static or downward trend as a result of livestock grazing.

Comment Source(s): 261-70

Response: The PRMP includes a description of the protection measures and management actions used by BLM to facilitate recovery and protection of riparian and wetlands areas (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.13 – Livestock Grazing and Appendix F-1) and in special/prescriptive management for specific areas (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2 – Biological Resources and Section 2.2.17 – ACECs).

5.5.12 Minerals Management**5.5.12.1 Comment (paraphrased):**

The DRMP is not clear concerning which areas mineral collection, exploration or development will be prohibited or restricted. Furthermore, which mineral collecting areas and mines would be removed from casual use, exploration or development? A detailed map of these locations should be provided to aid in understanding the impacts of these closure and restriction decisions.

For the areas closed for mineral collection, exploration, and development the DRMP does not provide sufficient rationale for the closure. The RMP should specifically explain why each area was chosen for closure and what other alternatives to closure were considered. Was restricted access by permit considered as an alternative to total closure? Within closed areas would permit for collection by academic and research establishments still be issued? A list of known sites and summary of access restrictions for each site should be included to clarify the context of these closures. Furthermore, the RMP should include information for the 92 sites submitted (Appendix H).

Comment Source(s): 9-4, 13-2, 15-2, 24-2, 25-2, 29-2, 30-2, 31-2, 33-2, 121-2, 134-4

Response: The PRMP, Chapter 2, Sections 2.2.14.2 – Minerals Management (Locatable Minerals) lists the locations where specific restrictions to activity conducted under 43 CFR 3809 are applied. Information regarding the sites identified in public comment is included in the PRMP in Appendix H.

5.5.12.2 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP fails to provide a complete inventory of mineral collecting sites and mines in the Decision Area. A map including location information (county, township, range, section, and latitude/longitude) so the impact of the proposed closures and restrictions can be quantified and appropriate areas set aside for use and access by gem and mineral societies and collectors. Furthermore, the RMP should include in the inventory the 92 sites submitted (Appendix H).

Comment Source(s): 9-4, 13-2, 24-2, 25-2, 29-2, 30-2, 31-2, 33-2, 121-2

Response: With regard to the specific location of mine sites the BLM does not encourage or condone general public access to abandoned mines due the inherent risks to public health and safety associated with these sites, specific information of these hazards is included in Chapter 3, Section 3.24 – Public Safety and Health. BLM recognizes that mineral prospectors and researchers have legitimate reasons for entering abandoned mines. Access for such purpose is encouraged by BLM when professionals follow standard MSHA safety procedures and use adequate safety equipment.

Regarding mineral collecting sites, no inventory of locations or specific information is provided as no such inventory exists. The BLM inventory consists of compilations of information on mine sites by the former U.S. Bureau of Mines and the U.S. Geological Survey. BLM also has information on geology and geologic formations that are known to have mineral deposits in them. The BLM does not specifically identify surface occurrences of collectable minerals. For planning purposes, and in the absence of other data, BLM uses the mine inventories as a proxy for mineral collecting sites. Only anecdotal information regarding recreational collecting opportunities is collected with little to no knowledge of frequency of use, thus any analysis utilizing this secondary information would be speculative at best. That said, however, specific information regarding the sites identified by public comment has been included in Appendix XX.

5.5.12.3 Comment (paraphrased):

Uncontrolled “casual use” mining along Hogeye Gulch within the Keyesville SRMA has resulted in irreversible destruction of the natural environment and will continue to do so as the price of gold increases. This destruction is evident by the undercutting of the creek bank, uprooting and felling of trees, and the excavation of large holes that pose risks to public safety. The DRMP should provide direction to extinguish all existing mining claims along Hogeye Gulch and prevent the filing of new ones.

Comment Source(s): 214-5

Response: All mining claims are considered by BLM to be valid until they are examined using the procedures identified in BLM Manual 3891. The suggestion that BLM should “extinguish” claims is prejudicial, and would constitute an unlawful taking of rights now provided existing mining claimants by law and regulation. The PRMP provides direction for the management of both mining activities authorized under the 3809 regulations (including refinement of the definition of casual use) and casual collection of mineral specimens (rock hounding). Specific guidance provided for these activities can be found in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.14.2 – Minerals Management and Section 2.2.15 – Recreation and Visitor Services.

5.5.12.4 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should be modified to prohibit the ‘hard’ permanent closure of abandoned mine features (shafts, adits, drifts, declines etc.). Hard closures of these features make it impossible for miners, mineral collectors, geologist and other researches to access underground mine workings. These mine features are important for studying geology as they provide exposures of subsurface rock units that haven’t been weathered as significantly as surface exposures. In most cases these mine features can be made safe without the need for a hard closure.

Comment Source(s): 134-09

Response: Determining the method of closure for abandoned mine land features is an implementation action and therefore outside the scope of the RMP. Prior to any “hard” closure a site-specific environmental analysis will be conducted to ensure any impacted resource is adequately addressed. Furthermore, the BLM does not encourage or condone public access to abandoned mines by the general public due to the inherent risks to public health and safety associated with these sites, specific information of these hazards is included in Chapter 3, Section 3.24 – Public Safety and Health.

Access to, or concerns over the use of, specific mining features for educational and research activities should be brought to the attention of BLM and authorized/permitted appropriately.

5.5.12.5 Comment (paraphrased):

The new fluid mineral lease stipulation "Controlled Surface Use — Existing Surface Use/Management" should be revised in the RMP to remove the term ‘public highway’ from the list of locations where there the stipulation would be applied. Furthermore, the situation should align with applicable DOGGR policies regarding split estate fluid mineral development and/or existing surface occupancy; as opposed to city/county ordinances; and/or the 200 foot standard proposed in the DRMP.

Comment Source(s): 243-3

Response: The PRMP modifies the Controlled Surface Use – Existing Surface Use/Management stipulation to be in conformance with existing state, county, and local statutes, regulations, and ordinances, including those for “public highways.” (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.14.1.1 – Minerals Management (Fluid Minerals))

5.5.12.6 Comment (paraphrased):

The fluid mineral lease stipulation "Controlled Surface Use — Sensitive Species" should be revised in the RMP to align with other buffer zones established in appendix L (i.e., 200ft). A proposed revision to the language could read as follows:

"Presence of habitat or species may result in the proposed action being moved. Buffer zones will be established on a project-by-project basis set forth by BLM in consultation with the lessee, and shall not exceed 200 feet."

Comment Source(s): 243-4

Response: The intent of this stipulation is not to establish a buffer but rather to reserve the right or option to move the proposed activity beyond the 200 meters or delay the activity more than 60 days currently provided in the general lease language. This stipulation is required balance protection of the sensitive species with protection of the lessees' rights granted under the lease.

5.5.12.7 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should not consider the withdrawal from mining claim location under the general mining law of any lands proven (through historic use) to be gold bearing. Specifically lands within the Keyesville SRMA.

Comment Source(s): 266-9, 266-10

Response: The presence or historic development of any locatable mineral is given consideration in determining proposed withdrawals; however, if resource concerns cannot be addressed through any other method then withdrawal is the appropriate tool to protect these resources. The PRMP provides direction for the management of both mining activities authorized under the 3809 regulations (including refinement of the definition of casual use) and casual collection of mineral specimens (rock hounding). Specific guidance provided for these activities can be found in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.14.2 – Minerals Management and Section 2.2.15 – Recreation and Visitor Services.

5.5.12.8 Comment (paraphrased):

The withdrawal of public lands to the location of mining claims eliminates the opportunity for commercial mining operations which could improve the economic conditions of the area and the country. Although the DRMP states some withdrawals would be assigned to a recreational use (casual use) this would still have undesirable economic impacts. The RMP should make available additional lands to the location of mining claims rather than reducing the opportunities for casual use and commercial mining.

Comment Source(s): 266-4, 266-5, 266-8

Response: The PRMP has been modified to address this concern through the reduction in areas proposed for withdrawal from the General Mining Law (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.12.3 – Lands and Realty).

5.5.12.9 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should clarify the rationale for the restriction of highbanking as a form of casual use. Specifically the RMP should document why an activity that has historically been permitted would now be prohibited. Furthermore, the RMP should state that highbanking and other small prospecting equipment should be allowed and encouraged. As long as miners are ensuring their activities are reasonably incident to prospecting operations, and the miner fill exploration holes the requirement to avoid unnecessary or undue degradation under regulations should be sufficiently met.

Comment Source(s): 266-6

Response: The PRMP further defines casual use in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.14.2 – Minerals Management. The intent is to restrict casual use to those activities that will not create no or negligible degradation of resources. Therefore, the rationale for the restriction on highbanking and certain types of equipment is due to their potential impact on soil, water, vegetation, cultural and wildlife resources. Therefore, the additional clarity provided by the PRMP is designed to minimize these risks.

5.5.12.10 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should clarify how mineral potential was established and the actual mechanism by which the proposed boundaries for the mineral withdrawals have been determined. There seems to be little basis in the geology. For example, the proposals do not seem to reflect the actual minerals inventory and classification. These classifications should reflect the geology, and especially the mineral potential of adjoining areas where virtually identical geological conditions (and hence mineralization potential) exist.

Comment Source(s): 134-10, 266-6

Response: Mineral potential maps were created for the PRMP analysis using mineral location data available from the U.S. Geological Survey. This data, in addition to information available to the BLM on recent and historic mineral exploration and activity were used to identify areas where potential for economically viable mineral exploration and development is likely to occur in the life of the Plan. The mineral potential areas were adjusted based on the geologic formation boundaries of rock types known to contain valuable mineral deposits.

5.5.12.11 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should define the term “non-routine” with regard to Hydraulic Fracturing on a federal mineral lease to ensure consistent applicability or the provision in Appendix L.7.5 – Oil and Gas Standard Operating Procedures-Hydraulic Fracturing, should be removed.

Comment Source(s): 243-5

Response: The term “nonroutine fracturing jobs” is found in 43 CFR 3162.3-2(a), however, there is no definition provided. A description of the types of activities that may be considered routine is provided in Chapter 6, Glossary.

5.5.12.12 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The DRMP fails to adequately establish and analyze the levels of mineral collecting and mining activity that could be achieved without restrictive policies and regulations. This analysis is important to understand the full impact of the decisions made in the RMP as they relate to the national economy and the Administration’s priorities for economic recovery.

Comment Source(s): 134-13

Response: All alternatives in the PRMP include some level of restriction imposed on mineral collection and mining activity beyond the scope of the RMP, e.g., Congressional withdrawals associated with designated Wilderness or county and state restrictions/requirements, additional

information regarding restrictions beyond the control of the BLM has been added to Chapter 3, Section 3.14 – Minerals Management. As such the level of mineral collecting or mining activity that could be achieved without such restrictions is would serve no purpose in making a reasoned choice between the alternatives presented in the PRMP. The PRMP therefore only provides analysis of the incremental impacts of the Proposed Plan actions when added to the existing restrictions (Chapter 4, Section 4.14 – Minerals Management).

5.5.12.13 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The DRMP fails fully address the impacts on the academic and research communities due to proposed closures of paleontological and casual use collection sites.

Comment Source(s): 15-3

Response: The PRMP has been modified to address this concern through text added to Chapter 2, Section 2.2.16 – Interpretation and Environmental Education. Access to, or concerns over the use of, areas for paleontological or casual use collection by academic and research communities should be brought to the attention of BLM and authorized/permitted appropriately. Access may be granted on a temporary basis.

5.5.12.14 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The actual or indirect (as a result of route restrictions) closure of mines and mineral collecting sites are unnecessary to protect non-mineral values. Competing resources could receive protection on an “as needed” bases addressed at a project specific level. The RMP should allow miners and mineral collectors to submit projects demonstrating how mineral exploration or develop can occur without damaging non-mineral resource.

Comment Source(s): 134-3

Response: The PRMP has been modified to address this concern through the reduction in areas proposed for withdrawal from the General Mining Law (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.12.3 – Lands and Realty) and through the direction for the management of both mining activities authorized under the 3809 regulations (including refinement of the definition of casual use) and casual collection of mineral specimens (rock hounding). Specific guidance provided for these activities can be found in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.14.2 – Minerals Management and Section 2.2.15 – Recreation and Visitor Services. There is no indirect impact on activities conducted under 3809 regulations as access to mining claims can be authorized without the existence of a route. Furthermore, causal collection is not impacted by route closures, as in accordance with 43 CFR 8365.1-5 a permit may be issued to authorized motorized access to collecting areas.

5.5.12.15 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should clarify the statement in Appendix L, Section 3.5, bullet 6: states "All oil spills will be contained closest to the source as possible. The USFWS will be notified within 48 hours of any oil spill." Need to clarify notification requirement is for reportable spills, and clarify who will notify USFWS. Recommend the bullet be changed to the following:

"All oil spills will be contained closest to the source as possible. The USFWS will be notified by BLM staff within 48 hours of any reportable oil spill in habitat."

Comment Source(s): 236-6

Response: The PRMP has been modified to reflect that the BLM will notify USFWS of reportable spills in habitat (Appendix L, Section 3.5).

5.5.12.16 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should clarify how the proposed withdrawals meet the BLMs policy. Specially policy indicates that withdrawals are only appropriate for areas of high mineral potential where another resource exists that can only be protect through withdrawal of an area to the General Mining Law.

Comment Source(s): 134-11

Response: The presence of any locatable mineral is given consideration in determining proposed withdrawals; however, if resource concerns cannot be addressed through any other means then in accordance with BLM policy withdrawal is the appropriate tool to protect these resources. The PRMP has been modified to address this concern through the reduction in areas proposed for withdrawal from the General Mining Law (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.12.3 – Lands and Realty).

5.5.12.17 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The DRMP fails to fully analyze the cumulative impact of restrictive management, both discretionary and non-discretionary on mineral collecting and mining.

Comment Source(s): 134-12

Response: The PRMP has been modified to address this concern through the addition of narrative describing the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to mineral collecting and mining activities (Chapter 4, Section 4.14 – Minerals Management, Section 4.15 – Recreation and Visitor Services, and Sections 4.26.1 & 4.26.5 – Cumulative Impacts).

5.5.12.18 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The DRMP fails to address the potential impact of the alternatives on dominant mineral interests of an existing mineral rights holder holding a lease or owning minerals that do not currently have surface use restrictions. The issues of reasonableness as it pertains to reasonable surface occupancy should be discussed considering increased costs associated with the alternatives that have the potential to make minerals uneconomical to recover.

Comment Source(s): 206-4

Response: The analysis of economic viability of oil and gas recovery is beyond the scope of the PRMP. The BLM has neither the propriety data nor the capacity to determine at which point an activity becomes unfeasible.

5.5.13 Recreation and Visitor Services

5.5.13.1 Comment (paraphrased):

Due to their unique and localized nature, rock, gem, mineral and fossil collecting locations should be excluded from closure or restriction as no practical mitigation is available for loss of access to such areas to the rock and mineral collection hobbyist. Furthermore, motorized access to these locations, including spur roads, should be maintained.

Comment Source(s): 13-1, 24-1, 25-1, 29-1, 30-1, 31-1, 33-1, 121-3

Response: Closure of rock, gem, mineral and fossil collecting locations is an appropriate tool for the management of other resources that are adversely impacted by these activities and activities associated with collection, such as motorized access. Closure is however, not the only tool to achieve these protective management objectives, and throughout the PRMP other restrictions in lieu of complete closure are implemented.

5.5.13.2 Comment (paraphrased):

The closure of 10,965 acres to public access within heavily developed producing oilfields under Alternative B (page 101) to address public safety concerns should be backed by scientific reasoning and documentation to justify the closure. It is suggested that prior to implementation public hearings should be held for any such closure.

Comment Source(s): 199-12

Response: The rationale for the public closure of these intensively industrialized areas stems from a concern for public safety in these areas. Specifically, these areas pose threats from exposure to, high temperature piping and equipment, hydrogen sulfide gas, natural gas, and crude oil. In these areas, complete public closure was determined to be the appropriate management tool for the protection of human health and safety, since other options, such as requiring all publics to receive the specialized training needed to be in these areas and use the required equipment (H₂S monitors, fire retardant clothing, etc.) was deemed infeasible and unenforceable.

The rationale used to determine the areas proposed closed in the PRMP results from the use of well density. Well density was used as a measure of the presence of potentially hazardous equipment e.g., as well density increase so does the density of associated piping, and therefore an indicator of the level of potential hazard to human health and safety.

5.5.13.3 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP (page 127), in all Alternatives, seeks to prohibit public access to recreation sites along the North Fork of the Kaweah River. These recreation sites include historic sites relative to the original Kaweah Colony, to which access should be allowed and developed for increased use. These sites provide an opportunity to educate the public about the historical significance of the area, along with effects of unchecked harvesting of the sequoia forests. Furthermore, closure of these sites effectively shuts off access to the river anywhere in the community of Three Rivers, unless access is achieved through private property. There is no documented environmental

justification for this closure. In addition, closure of these recreational sites prohibits the "Recreational" aspect and eliminates the "Scenic" aspect of the proposed Wild and Scenic River designation, which seems to be counterproductive to the proposal as only those in trespass would be able to experience the Recreational qualities of the river and appreciate the Scenic values.

Comment Source(s): 199-15

Response: Closure of the recreation sites along the North Fork of the Kaweah does vary by alternative, ranging from open, to seasonally closed, to complete closure. The intent of the seasonal restrictions and closure is to protect both the important cultural resources and sensitive ecological resources of the area from exceedance of the viable carrying capacity of these sites. As it notes in Chapter 3, Section 3.15.4.3 – Recreation and Visitor Services, the topography and terrain in which these sites are located make them only suitable for a small number of vehicles and visitors; furthermore it is infeasible to remedy this through future development. When these sites were open (prior to 2007) the limited capacity of these sites was frequently exceeded during the summer season, resulting in dangerous parking situations and critical issues of public health and safety. Additional details concerning the undesirable impacts of overuse are found in Chapter 3, Section 3.4 – Cultural Resource, and Chapter 3, Section 3.15.4.3 – Recreation and Visitor Services.

Additional text has been added to Chapter 4, Section 4.4 – Cultural Resource to clarify the beneficial impact of the proposed management.

5.5.13.4 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP does not provide sufficient rationale and documentation for the closure of areas to rock hounding including the casual collection of fossils, mineral agates, and semi-precious stones. The DRMP does not provide sufficient evidence to support the need to close these areas in order to protect archaeological features and artifacts. In order to maintain public access to collection areas while still allowing for control of this activity, the RMP should accommodate scheduled collection periods for the general public. These scheduled periods should be appropriated for the geographic area (i.e. when average daytime temperatures are between 50 – 85 degrees F). For example, access to rock collecting areas in Horse Canyon (proposed closed in Alternative B), should be allowed one weekend in Spring and Fall.

Comment Source(s): 3-2, 9-3, 13-4, 24-4, 25-4, 29-4, 30-4, 31-4, 33-4, 121-5

Response: The rationale for closure of areas to rock hounding is including in the PRMP in Chapter 4 under the impacted resources section. The rationale for closure is described by the impacts incurred under the alternative(s) under which no closure is proposed (e.g., Alternative E for Horse Canyon ACEC).

The proposed plan alternative (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.17 – ACECs) in the PRMP still includes closure of casual collection (43 CFR 8365.1-5) in the Horse Canyon and Chico Martinez ACECs this does not preclude other authorizations for activities including research, education and recreation.

5.5.13.5 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP page 79 proposes to close The Dam RMZ to overnight camping, which includes Sandy Flat (a large flat area with direct access to the lower Kern River). Although the RMP is accurate in the assessment that the area would benefit from additional restrictions and rehabilitations efforts, limited overnight camping should still be allowed as the area has historically been used for this activity and the site provides a rare opportunity within the Keyesville SRMA to camp directly adjacent to the Kern River.

Comment Source(s): 18-1, 215-10, 227-3

Response: The proposed plan alternative in the PRMP has been modified to allow for limited designated camping on Sandy Flat (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.15 – Recreation and Visitor Services).

5.5.13.6 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP fails to cite any scientific reason for prohibition of overnight camping, campfires, and the discharge of firearms within the Kaweah River recreation sites. These restrictions appear to contradict the objectives of the North Fork ERMA (page 159). Furthermore, the prohibition on the discharge of firearms is in conflict with recent directives by the President, Secretary of Interior, and the Director of BLM.

Comment Source(s): 199-18

Response: The basis for limiting recreation activities and access rests with the needs for visitor management. The objectives for the ERMA (Alternative E) facilitate fishing, hunting and water play. The Kaweah ACEC in Alternative E prohibits the “discharge of firearms except the legal taking of game species”, therefore is complimentary to the ERMA objectives for hunting. Campfires and overnight camping were not considered necessary for full participation in the targeted activities. Furthermore, State laws restrict the discharge of firearms within specific distances from man-made objects (roads, trails, structures etc.) and dwellings for safety reasons. As these recreation sites meet these criteria for restriction under State law, the prohibition in this decision is not conflict with recent Executive directives.

5.5.13.7 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP proposes severe restrictions on hunting and shooting throughout the Decision Area. These decisions appear to be in direct conflict with recent directives by the President, Secretary of Interior, and the Director of BLM.

Comment Source(s): 199-2

Response: The PRMP proposes coordination with California Department of Fish and Game regarding possible prohibition of hunting; it does not, however, effectuate a prohibition on hunting. In the three areas proposed for closure to hunting, two are intensively visited recreation sites where the discharge of firearms is already prohibited by State law; the final area (Atwell Island) is in the process of habitat restoration and would allow for hunting under special circumstances.

The PRMP has been modified (Chapter 3, Section 3.15 – Recreation and Visitor Services) to reflect that the discharge of firearms (shooting sports), except for the legal taking of game, is already prohibited within numerous areas that meet the criteria for “unsafe shooting areas” based on State law which accounts for the majority of the acres where this restriction would apply.

5.5.13.8 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should not designate the Urban Interface RMZ as a formal OHV use area as no previous attempts have been made to control OHV use in this area, nor does the DRMP fails to adequately describe how OHV use would be controlled or contained. If the RMP be implemented as described in Alternative B, conflicting uses (hunting and OHV use) may be superimposed upon one another in an area that has historically primarily been used for hunting.

Comment Source(s): 212-4

Response: The specific measures used to manage the Temblor SRMA and subsequently the Urban Interface RMZ would be described in an activity level plan. Without supporting decisions identifying the boundaries and outlining the board objectives of these areas the subsequent level of planning would not take place. Therefore, in order to provide for future management of OHV use in this area decisions (designations) need to be made within the RMP. Any previous failure to address OHV issues in this area can be partially attributed to having no existing land use planning level guidance for this area that addresses this issue.

Hunting and OHV activities are both uses of public lands that are allowable and currently occurring within the proposed Urban Interface RMZ without any provisions in the existing 1997 Caliente RMP. Any conflicts between these uses would have to be documented and addressed on a case-by-case basis.

5.5.13.9 Comment (paraphrased):

It is unclear in the DRMP whether hunting would still be allowed in the Urban Interface RMZ of the Temblor Range SRMA as this activity is not listed as a targeted activity in the Appendix H Matrix and Management Framework for this RMZ. This area should remain open to hunting as this area has been a popular area for upland bird hunting for over 70 years by local hunters and those from other areas in Kern County. In addition, the Urban Interface RMZ has the highest density of guzzlers that were provided by California Dept. of Fish and Game in conjunction with local sportsmen groups.

If hunting is curtailed in the Urban Interface RMZ the decrease in hunting opportunities and impact of displaced hunters should be addressed.

Comment Source(s): 212-5, 212-6, 212-7

Response: Activities listed as “targeted” in the SRMA/RMZ objectives provide future guidance for the development of activity level plans and focus management on the activities that most require it. Not listing an activity as targeted does not prohibit the activity from the area. As such, hunting would still be allowed in the Urban Interface RMZ and analysis of impacts to hunters/hunting opportunity as a result of closure of this area is not needed.

5.5.13.10 *Comment (paraphrased):*

Due to the access configuration of the Keyesville SRMA (i.e., one road in/out) evacuation of the public during an emergency such as a wildland fire would be extremely difficult on heavy use weekends. Furthermore, access into the area by emergency vehicles would prove difficult when use is high. These facts pose serious risks to public health and safety that could only be alleviated by controlling the amount of visitation at any one time.

Comment Source(s): 214-4

Response: Establishment of a visitor carrying capacity for the Keyesville area is impractical as Keyesville Road is a county road providing access to numerous private properties and National Forest System lands. A subsequent activity level plan for the Keyesville SRMA would address visitor controls which may indirectly limit visitor numbers in specific areas.

5.5.13.11 *Comment (paraphrased):*

Abandoned campfires have the potential to ignite wildfires especially during the hot, dry summer season when use at the Keyesville SRMA is highest, thus adding to concerns over public safety within the SRMA. To address concerns over abandoned campfires the DRMP should prohibit campfires within the Keyesville SRMA during the summer season.

Comment Source(s): 214-10

Response: Use of campfires is managed through the California Campfire Permit program, which allows for enforcement actions associated with abandoned campfires. Should a complete restriction on campfires be necessary during hot dry weather, the BLM in coordination with other fire prevention entities would issue a temporary restriction on the activity (campfire ban). These two management tools are deemed sufficient to manage campfire use within the Keyesville SRMA.

5.5.13.12 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should ensure that permitted special events occurring within the Keyesville SRMA are managed appropriately.

Comment Source(s): 214-18

Response: Competitive and organized group events within the Keyesville SRMA are managed under Special Recreation Permit. The specific management special recreation permits is covered by BLM policy and guidance (H-2930-1 – Recreation Permit Administration) and is therefore outside the scope of the RMP.

5.5.13.13 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The DRMP does not provide an accurate description of visitation within the Keyesville SRMA. The visitation numbers provided in Table 3.15-5 appear to be grossly exaggerated.

Comment Source(s): 214-21

Response: The visitation data for the Keyesville area presented in the RMP is gathered by electronic vehicle counters placed at the entrances to Keyesville South and Keyesville North. These numbers are then multiplied by the number of people in the vehicle (a factor provided by the Bureau of Transportation Statics for Recreation Visits). It is acknowledged that there is margin for error in this collection method as a result of administrative, authorized and residential visits that also get counted. Also the fact that a single vehicle may leave the area and return multiple times in the same day results in a duplicate counting. That said however, electronic vehicle counters still provide the most feasible method of achieving estimated visitation data.

5.5.13.14 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The decision to charge fees is an implantation level decision and is required to be fully vetted under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) before the fees can be implemented. Stating an intention to charge new fees in the RMP is premature as decisions made during the implementation phase including identifying other funding sources may preclude the need for a fee. All references to fees should be removed from the RMP.

Comment Source(s): 215-5, 227-1, 227-2, 274-2

Response: In general, statements concerning fees in the RMP are there to disclose the possibility that specific recreational sites and areas may, at some future point, charge for services. This would of course, occur after the full process to establish fees in accordance with the prevailing law (currently FLREA) had been completed. It is important that the RMP disclose the potential for fees to allow the public to fully understand the implications of assigning specific objectives to recreational areas.

For clarification additional language has been added to the PRMP stating that “the establishment of fees will be fully addressed in an area specific activity level plan and in accordance with the current regulation guiding the establishment of recreational use fees.”

5.5.13.15 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should weigh the burden of negotiating fees against the potential revenue that would be received. It is recognized that it is appropriate for users to contribute to the cost of managing public lands they use however; the concern is that if fees are assessed local residents might be forced to assume an unequal share of the management costs. Local users are generally more invested in helping to manage the area than visitors. Furthermore the process necessary to establish fees under FLREA is complex.

Comment Source(s): 226-17

Response: The PRMP suggests the possible use of fees as a management tool in several areas. These suggestions are made to allow the public to realize the potential future consequences of the proposed management. That said the process of establishing fees is separate from that of the RMP and would be conducted at an activity planning level where consideration of local users' verses visitors could be weighed against the management needs.

5.5.13.16 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should reconcile the conflicting information provided with regard to river access to the North Fork of the Kaweah River from the Advance Colony archeological site (page 235) in light of the existing closure (since 2007) and proposal to permanently eliminate access. Furthermore, the rationale for the closure of North Fork of the Kaweah River recreation sites should be clarified as lack of resources is not an environmental concern. Budgetary issues should be address at a federal level, whereas RMP planning should focus on carrying out the agencies mission.

Comment Source(s): 199-19

Response: The PRMP has been modified to include addition information concerning the closure of the recreation sites along the North Fork of the Kaweah River (Chapter 3, Section 3.15.4.3 – Recreation and Visitor Services). The rational for the proposed closure of these sites in the proposed plan alternative is provided in several places throughout the PRMP including Chapter 4, Section 4.4 – Cultural Resources, and Section 4.15 – Recreation and Visitor Services.

5.5.13.17 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should be modified with regard to the Case Mountain ERMA to reference valuable passive recreational activities such as wildlife and nature observation, photography, picnicking, nature education, pond fishing and simple, quiet enjoyment of the natural setting. The Case Mountain area offers rare example of these opportunities not generally found on public lands.

Comment Source(s): 274-5

Response: The proposed plan alternative in the PRMP has been modified to reflect this concern (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.15 – Recreation and Visitor Services).

5.5.13.18 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should clarify the level of involvement the proposed Temblor Range SRMA would hold in the process to review and approve oil and gas proposals (i.e., ADPs), facilities improvements and Rights-of-way requests. Furthermore, how much control over access would the BLM maintain, as a 'new' proposal may result in a significant increase in traffic and recreational use? Finally, the RMP should clarify how funding for the SRMA would be secured and if funding to maintain the management of the SRMA is currently available.

Comment Source(s): 256-1, 256-2, 256-3, 256-4

Response: The designation of the Temblor Range SRMA does not change the process by which oil and gas proposals, facility improvements and rights-of-way requests are handled. Recreational values and opportunities, along with the health and safety of public lands users, are currently required to be considered in the NEPA process for all the aforementioned actions and would continue to be address through specific mitigations, "conditions of approval" and "terms and conditions". The designation of the Temblor Range SRMA does however provide specific objectives (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.15 – Recreation and Visitor Services) and allows for

the development of an activity level plan which will focus the analysis conducted on any authorization to ensure it meets these objectives.

As to, the question of controlling access, the RMP provides specific direction to seek legal public access to the area (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.11 – Comprehensive Trail and Travel Management). It does not provide for any limitations on number of visitors or the methods of transport they choose to visit in. The RMP does however make decisions to restrict the issuance of Special Recreation Permits to control competitive and commercial users in the SRMA (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.15 – Recreation and Visitor Services).

Funding for the SRMA is not specifically addressed, other than the assertion that a user fee may be required (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.15 – Recreation and Visitor Services (Key Implementation Decisions)) as the issue of funding is outside the scope of the RMP and is addressed through activity level planning.

5.5.13.19 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should be modified to remove the Temblor Range SRMA and ERMA from the document. Furthermore, any reference, map or exhibit that depicts the boundary of the Temblor Range SRMA/ERMA should also be removed from the document. The DRMP states (pages 371 and 372) that rules for enforcement, funding and allocation of personnel have not yet been established for this area. As such, without securing these resources, including the budget commitment to funding, the RMP should not designate this area. Identification of this area on planning maps becomes an open invitation to the unmanaged and unregulated public to overrun the Temblor Range resulting in; increased harassment of livestock, trampling of forage, vandalism to infrastructure, and increased risk of fire. Presentation of planning maps in the RMP (Maps 2.5, 2.6, or 2.10) will be mistaken as a designated managed area, which is currently only an undeveloped and unbudgeted objective.

Comment Source(s): 263-4

Response: It is acknowledged that presentation of “draft” and “proposed” ideas provides information to the public that may be misinterpreted as “actual fact”. The agency however, has no control over the interpretation of this material by the public beyond the efforts it makes to aid in understanding the process and proposed decisions contained in the document. It does however, have a duty to provide management guidance for public lands and address all reasonable management alternatives in its RMPs. As such, presentation of these designations and decisions, including all maps and reference, in the DRMP and PRMP is required to aid the public in reviewing, understanding and providing feedback on the proposed management of the Temblor Range area.

The comment implies there are already issues with “unmanaged and unregulated public” within the Temblor Range area resulting in “harassment of livestock, trampling of forage, vandalism to infrastructure... etc.” As such, management of the existing uses of this area is required to resolve any perceived issues and designation of the area as either an SRMA or and ERMA is the appropriate tool to allow for this management. The precise details concerning the allocation of staff, enforcement, funding etc. are beyond the scope of the RMP, and generally established in an activity level plan. Without direction and designation provided in the RMP the activity level

plan for the area would not occur and the area would continue to go relatively unmanaged (Chapter 4, Section 4.15.1 – Recreation and Visitor Services).

5.5.13.20 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should be modified to reduce the size of the proposed Temblor Range SRMA/ERMA. The DRMP provides no supporting documentation to explain why this area is designated, especially with the large portion of private land on the northern end of the area. The modified boundary should be much small and solely encompass public lands. It is recommended that the designation is further limited to only the area known as the Urban Interface RMZ and eliminate any mention of the Temblor Range SRMA/ERMA.

Comment Source(s): 263-5, 263-7, 263-8

Response: The maps included with the DRMP erroneously included additional private property outside a potential BLM acquisition and have been corrected in the PRMP (Maps 2.5 and 2.2.8). The boundary of the Temblor Range SRMA was established based on existing recreational use (Chapter 3, Section 3.15.5 – Recreation and Visitor Services), consideration of future use, and the need to provide landscape level management (i.e., at a large enough scale to effectively manage the use, experiences and opportunities). The boundary was generally restricted to public land; however it did include private property to the north based on the assumption that that property would be acquired, as the acquisition process was already underway.

Urban Interface RMZ would not provide the ability to manage at a landscape level, furthermore elimination of any mention of the Temblor Range SRMA/ERMA would not comply with existing agency policy and guidance as RMZs are distinct sub-units of SRMAs.

5.5.13.21 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The DRMP makes a significant omission in its assumptions (pages 371 and 372) in that “it should assume that the private land owners will not cooperate with the BLM”. Since the private land owners were unaware of this designation the BLM should make no assumption as to the potential cooperation or lack of cooperation afforded by these land owners.

Comment Source(s): 263-6

Response: The addition of a general assumption regarding the cooperation or lack thereof, of private land owners adds no value to the PRMP. In fact, the vision provided by the multiple use mandate can only be achieved with the cooperation of all stakeholders. The agency therefore assumes that both public lands users and those invested in the management of public lands will corporate in the management of those lands. Without working under this assumption, the agency would work in isolation; loose the innovation, creativity and flexibility it has to resolve issues to make multiple use work; and alienate those serves.

The RMP process, specifically the publishing of the DRMP and associated public meetings are the tools by which the agency makes public lands stakeholders aware of the “proposed” actions of a plan. By participating in this process and providing feedback a commentor is cooperating in

the future management decisions and allocations made by the agency. As such, the assumption that stakeholders, including private land owners, will cooperate is an accurate statement.

5.5.13.22 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should remove the inference that there is “generally little difference between the areas managed for recreation across the action alternatives” (page vi) or complete the statement by acknowledging some action alternatives would result in a significant reduction of route miles and thus opportunity for many users.

Comment Source(s): 215-7, 227-31

Response: The statement “there is generally little difference...” refers only to “areas” (read acres of SRMAs and ERMAs) managed for recreation across the action alternatives. The statement is true with the greatest difference being approximately 2,000 acres. Both the preceding line – “... action alternatives increase the level of opportunity specific restrictions...” – and the sentence several paragraphs prior – “Route designations within the alternatives range from a sizeable increase in the amount of routes designated for motorized use...” – speak to the increase/decrease in opportunity. For clarity the parenthetical qualifier “(acres of SRMA/ERMAs)” has been added.

5.5.13.23 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should consider providing additional access to public lands for shooting sports. Opportunities are lacking in western Kern County which forces participants to travel extensive distances to take part in these activities.

Comment Source(s): 197-2

Response: All public lands, unless otherwise closed, are available for shooting sports provided the activity is conducted in conformance with State laws. The restrictions on shooting sports are identified in prescriptive and special management for areas of ecological importance, Recreation Management Areas and ACECs (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2 – Biological Resources, Section 2.2.15 – Recreation and Visitor Services, Section 2.2.17 – ACECs).

5.5.14 *Areas of Critical Environmental Concern*

5.5.14.1 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should clarify the need for special management within the Bitter Creek ACEC with regard to oil and gas development. The statements in the Reasonably Foreseeable Development Scenario contradict the findings of the ACEC report i.e., special management required due to proximity to Cuyama Basin (high potential for oil and gas) versus no new development anticipated outside of existing leases, and need to be reconciled.

Comment Source(s): 209-6

Response: The PRMP has been modified to clarify the need for special management within the Bitter Creek ACEC with regard to oil and gas development (Chapter 3, Section 3.17 – ACECs).

5.5.14.2 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP inappropriately includes privately owned land within the boundaries of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs). The inclusion of private lands, regardless of the resources they contain, is an overreach of federal authority and these lands should not be included within ACEC designations without the permission of the private landowner. Furthermore, the DRMP inadequately describes the impact on private property owners from these decisions such as impairment of property values and hindrance of the ability to conduct private business. The RMP should clearly state “the BLM has no jurisdiction on private property” and “that lawful activities conducted on private property adjacent to BLM ACEC’s are not subject to any policies contained in the RMP”.

Comment Source(s): 7-1, 129-1, 130-1, 208-1, 209-1, 209-11, 210-3, 210-4, 257-1

Response: The PRMP clearly states in numerous locations including Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2 – Decision Area and Chapter 2 – Introduction that the management direction provided throughout the document applies only to federal interests. For clarity the boundaries of Bitter Creek and Chico Martinez ACECs have been reduced to include only federal interests (public lands surface and federal mineral estate).

5.5.14.3 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should prohibit hunting and target shooting in the Case Mountain portion of the proposed Kaweah ACEC. The area is highly visited on a daily basis by hikers, mountain bikers and horse riders (including neighbors out walking their dogs and kids playing). In addition, the area is densely wooded and crisscrossed with single-track trails. Should hunting be needed or desirable activity within the area, could it be restricted to specific types of hunting that would be more compatible with ACEC values and visitation.

Comment Source(s): 32-2, 274-7, 274-8, 274-9, 274-10

Response: The proposed plan alternative in the PRMP identifies the entire Kaweah ACEC, inclusive of the Case Mountain area, as available for some shooting sports including hunting. It does, however, require air-soft or paintball activities be authorized by BLM. Additionally, State laws restricting firearms use for safety in effect prohibit the activity on certain areas of public lands meeting these requirements. Finally, the proposed supplementary rules are designed to better manage shooting sports activities throughout the Field Office (Appendix N). No recommendation for a closure to hunting to CDFG is proposed due to the large size of the area and the determination that safe hunting practices are sufficient to protect other uses of these areas.

5.5.14.4 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should adopt Alternative C with regard to the Salinas River ACEC to ensure its continued protection from the degradation as a result of mining activities. The removal of the ACEC designation in the DRMP’s preferred alternative is assumed to be an indication that there

are foreseeable development proposals for this area, which would be curtailed by an ACEC designation.

Comment Source(s): 198-2

Response: The PRMP Chapter 4, Section 4.17.3 – ACECs describes how the Salinas River would be adequately protected by prescriptive management provided through its identification as an area of ecological importance. Without the need for special management attention, the ACEC designation would not be warranted.

5.5.14.5 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should adopt Alternative C with regard to the Rusty Peak and Irish Hills proposed ACEC designations. It is critical to protect the rare serpentine plant communities that are worthy of exceptional conservation standards provided only through ACEC designation.

Comment Source(s): 198-3

Response: The PRMP Chapter 4, Section 4.17.3 – ACECs describes how the Rusty Peak and Irish Hills areas would be adequately protected by prescriptive management provided through its identification as an area of ecological importance. Without the need for special management attention, the ACEC designation would not be warranted.

5.5.14.6 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should modify the preferred alternative with regard to the Upper Cuyama ACEC in the following respects: (1) Close the area to fluid mineral leasing. Oil and gas drilling currently does not exist in this area, and the introduction of intensive industrial resource extraction would be incompatible with the preservation of rare plants and animals in this area and would detract from the important and relevant values for which this ACEC was nominated. Importantly, the stipulations proposed for this area – CSU-Protected Species and CSU-Sensitive Species – are not adequate to protect the ACEC’s values, since these stipulations can be excepted or modified. (2) Expand the identification of lands as unavailable for livestock grazing to include all suitable habitat of California jewelflower or Kern primrose sphinx moth. (3) Add special management restrictions for other activities that could potentially harm California jewelflower or Kern primrose sphinx moth, such as restrictions on road construction and maintenance and OHV use. (4) Expand the ACEC boundary to encompass federal mineral estate in T8N, R24W, Section 17 and public lands at the base of Goode and Tennison canyons. These additional lands contain the same values as those within the ACEC and it is appropriate to include them or provide an explanation as to why they are not included.

Comment Source(s): 220-11, 220-13, 220-14, 220-15

Response: The closure to the Upper Cuyama Valley ACEC to fluid mineral leasing is not necessary to protect the relevant and important values for which this area was recommended. The CSU stipulations sufficiently protect the special status species and exception would not be granted or modification made unless the proposed activity could be demonstrated to have no effect on these species.

The PRMP has been modified (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.13 – Livestock Grazing) to clarify that in addition to the area that contains California jewelflower and Kern primrose sphinx moth, the no grazing guideline may also be applied to adjacent areas that are determined to 1) have similar habitat characteristics and are likely to contain the species, or 2) directly influence or affect the habitat conditions in the area containing the species.

The PRMP includes area-wide objectives and decisions addressing other activities that could potentially harm relevant and important values of the ACEC, however, since these objectives and decisions apply Decision Area-wide they are not considered to be “special management attention”.

The PRMP has been modified to include some of the additional federal interests within the ACEC boundary, where those lands have the same relevant and important values (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.17 – ACECs).

5.5.14.7 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should adopt Alternative C with regard to Chico Martinez ACEC. The Area has historically been designated an ACEC due to the important and relevant cultural, paleontological, geological, and biological resources as documented in both the 1984 Coast Valley RMP and the 1997 Caliente RMP. Loss of this ACEC designation would result in reduced attention and protection for these relevant and important values.

Comment Source(s): 220-16

Response: The PRMP has been modified based on new information resulting from research in the Chico Martinez ACEC to continue to recommend continued designation as an ACEC in the proposed plan (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.17 – ACECs).

5.5.14.8 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP fails to adequately explain why the Chimineas Ranch publically proposed ACEC does not meet the importance criteria for designation. The DRMP states “it does not present more than locally significant assemblages of threatened and endangered species habitat and is not particularly vulnerable to adverse change as it is surrounded by CDF&G Ecological Reserve and USFS lands” (page 317). The arrival at this conclusion is questionable as the surrounding CDF&G Ecological Reserve was acquired as a State Ecological Reserve because of its state-wide significance. Furthermore, the California Wildlife Conservation Board (“WCB”) recognized the regional, statewide, and national importance of this area, stating that the lands were important “for the protection of several sensitive plant and animal species and to provide a direct link between the Los Padres National Forest and the CPNM. In addition, the arrival at the conclusion that the area is not vulnerable to adverse change is also questionable considering the 2010 Environmental Assessment for the North Chimineas Allotment (BLM 2010) documents the area is not meeting a variety of standards for rangeland health due to livestock grazing. The RMP should clarify its findings and designate the area as an ACEC with special management aimed at curtailing the significant impacts occurring in the area as a result of livestock grazing.

Comment Source(s): 220-18

Response: The statements, conclusions and determinations made by CDF&G or WCB with their own purpose, scope and intent, are not used by BLM nor the ACEC relevance and importance criteria found in 43 CFR 1610.7-2 and BLM Manual 1613.1. As such the determination made in the ACEC Report (Appendix I of the Draft RMP/Draft EIS, 2011) has not been modified in the PRMP and no “special management attention” is required to protect resources in the area.

5.5.14.9 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP fails to adequately explain why the East Temblor Range publically proposed ACEC does not meet the relevance and importance criteria for designation. The DRMP states that the rare plant association known as the upper Sonoran sub-shrub scrub community occurs in the proposed area, however, this community “is located in several regions of southern California” (Appendix I-52). In actuality this plant community is found only in the Temblor Range, the nearby San Emidio Range, and on a very limited basis in the Greenhorn Mountains. Additionally, a rare woodland community known as Tucker oak woodland extends from the Carrizo Plain National Monument down the east side of the Temblors through the proposed area. Furthermore, the area is identified as a wildlife corridor in the San Joaquin Valley Recovery Plan and as a NCLWMA expanding its significance. The area continues to require special management to address increase in OHV use. The RMP should clarify its findings and designate the area as an ACEC.

Comment Source(s): 220-21, 220-22

Response: The PRMP has been modified to clarify the extent of the upper Sonoran sub-shrub scrub community and Tucker Oak woodlands (Chapter 3, Section 3.17 – ACECs). The extent as described by Twisselmann’s *A Flora of Kern County* and Holland (1986) is consistent with the determination that the importance of the populations of this plant community is not of more than local significance.

The proposed plan alternative of the PRMP provides prescriptive management for the area as a Special Recreation Management Area that addresses the management of OHV use. As such the determination made in the ACEC Report (Appendix I of the Draft RMP/Draft EIS, 2011) has not been modified in the PRMP and no “special management attention” is required to protect resources in the area.

5.5.14.10 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should provide a more thorough analysis of the relevance and importance criteria to fully comply with guidelines relating to evaluating and designating ACECs. This analysis should include discussions as to how the alternate sizes of ACECs and management prescriptions are sufficient to protect the identified values. Finally the analysis should explicitly state the justification for not recommending an ACEC for designation as appropriate.

Comment Source(s): 220-23

Response: The PRMP has been modified to included additional information generated through the public comments and internal review with regard to relevant and important values for some proposed ACECs (Chapter 3, Section 3.17 – ACECs).

As stated in the “Methods of Analysis” (Chapter 4, Section 4.17 – ACECs), the analysis focuses on relevance and importance criteria as a whole and if these criteria would receive adequate protection without special management derived from ACEC designation. The relevant values themselves are not expressly analyzed as an ACEC Section but are included in the discussion of the parent resource (Chapter 4, Section 4.2 – Biological Resources, Section 4.4 – Cultural Resources, Section 4.6 – Paleontological Resources). This analysis is deemed to be sufficient for the authorized officer to make a reasoned choice between the alternatives.

The determinations made with regard to relevance and importance criteria in the ACEC Report (Appendix I of the Draft RMP/Draft EIS, 2011) are explicitly presented in tabular format including the rationale for the determination. Furthermore, Chapter 4, Section 4.17 – ACECs has been modified to explicitly state, as appropriate under each alternative, whether the need for management attention beyond that generally prescribed by that alternative is required over the life of the Plan in order to adequately protect the relevant and important values for each area.

5.5.14.11 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should include the following information omitted from the evaluation of the proposed Hopper Mountain ACEC: the area includes one of the last remaining intact stands of black walnut in southern California. This value – coupled with the area’s habitat value for California condors – indicates the presence of natural processes or systems (i.e., “rare, endemic or relic plants, or plant communities”). Therefore, the “No” response listed in the Relevance Criteria Determination should be changed to “Yes” to indicate that these values are present in the area, further demonstrating the necessity of designating this area as an ACEC.

Given the importance of area to California condors and the significant impacts drilling has on these critically imperiled species the RMP should modify the preferred alternative in regard to special management of the Hopper Mountain ACEC to close the area to further oil and gas leasing.

Comment Source(s): 220-4, 220-5

Response: The PRMP has been modified to include information regarding the presence of black walnut (Chapter 3, Section 3.17 – ACECs). All federal mineral estate within the Hopper Mountain ACEC is currently under oil and gas lease; therefore, a closure to future leasing would not prevent development under these current leases.

5.5.14.12 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should modify the preferred alternative with regard to the boundary of the proposed Bitter Creek ACEC in so that it is slightly enlarged to encompass other adjacent public lands. Specifically, the boundary should be adjusted westward to include the federal surface and mineral estate in T9N R24W and T10N R24W, and northward to include the federal surface and mineral estate in T11N R23W and T11N R24W. These areas are adjacent to the Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge, and should be included in the ACEC boundary for the very same reasons that apply to the proposed ACEC. Expanding the boundaries would also ensure connectivity between the Bitter Creek ACEC and the proposed Upper Cuyama Valley ACEC. If the boundary is not enlarged the RMP should contain an explanation as to why these areas were not included in the proposed ACEC.

Comment Source(s): 220-6, 220-7

Response: The PRMP has modified the Bitter Creek ACEC boundary to include all BLM administered surface and mineral estate within the Congressionally Approved Acquisition Boundary for the Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.17 – ACECs). There is no BLM administered surface or mineral estate inside the Approved Acquisition Boundary within T9N, R24W and T10N, R24W; and T11N, R23W and T11N, R24W are outside the Approved Acquisition Boundary.

5.5.14.13 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should designate public lands within the Tehachapi Mountains as an ACEC, or other appropriate designated, to contribute to the preservation of the Tehachapi Linkage. The existing uses in this area are generally compatible with wildlife movement; however more intensive uses, such as mineral extraction or energy production, are not compatible.

Comment Source(s): 221-7

Response: The PRMP has been modified to address this concern through the identification of the Tehachapi area as an area of ecological importance with appropriate prescriptive management for the preservation of the ecological connection between the southern Sierra Nevada Mountains and foothills, and transverse ranges (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2 – Biological Resources).

5.5.14.14 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should discuss the need for acquisition of private inholdings and adjacent private parcels within the Kaweah ACEC. The acquisitions are needed to ensure the highest protection of Giant Sequoia groves and other important and relevant values.

Comment Source(s): 274-3

Response: The PRMP provides sufficient guidance to facilitate the acquisition of private inholdings from willing sellers within all ACECs and for other resource purposes (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.12 – Lands and Realty).

5.5.14.15 *Comment (paraphrased):*

If combining the North Fork and Case Mountain areas into a single ACEC the RMP should recognize the distinct difference between the two geographically separate areas.

Comment Source(s): 274-1

Response: The PRMP has been modified to address this concern (Chapter 3, Section 3.17 – ACECs).

5.5.14.16 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should consider livestock grazing as a potential management tool in maintaining populations of *Mimulus shevockii* within the proposed Cyrus Canyon ACEC. Livestock grazing has

been a historic use of the area that may have contributed to the continued success of this plant in the area. Furthermore, to provide additional protection for these plant populations OHV trespass routes should be closed at the improved country road.

Comment Source(s): 264-6, 264-7, 269-1, 269-2

Response: The PRMP did consider a range of livestock grazing alternatives for the Cyrus Canyon area which included continued grazing of the general area and excluding the *Mimulus shevockii* populations. Furthermore, no documentation was provided to support the claim that livestock grazing may contribute to the success of this plant in Cyrus Canyon.

The proposed plan alternative of the PRMP has been modified to close many of the routes in this area for the protection of this plant species (Appendix E).

5.5.14.17 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The public lands in the planning area include some of the last remaining native habitats in the Central Valley. The DRMP itself admits that, "Overall, the trend within the Planning Area is a continued fragmentation, degradation and loss of natural habitats, followed by a reduction in biodiversity" (page 220). It is of critical concern therefore that as much of this remaining habitat is fully protected to help offset the reduced biodiversity. The RMP should modify the preferred alternative to include designation of all the 108,377 acres of ACEC in the 22 area described in Alternative C. In addition the RMP should also designate all "special management areas" that contain special status species habitat as ACECs. Furthermore, the RMP should include clear language allowing for the expansion of each ACEC to encompass any adjacent, suitable lands that may become available.

Comment Source(s): 253-9, 261-57, 261-58

Response: The designation of all areas containing special status species habitat as ACECs would be inconsistent with BLM policy and guidance (BLM Manual 1613) as to be recommended an area must meet three conditions: possess relevant values, meet importance criteria, and require special management attention. The proposed plan alternative of the PRMP has been modified to include additional ACEC acreage (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.17 – ACECs). Language allowing for the expansion of these ACECs, however, has not been included as this evaluation and recommendation for designation of these areas would be subject to site-specific NEPA, public review, and a RMP amendment.

5.5.14.18 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should be modified to exclude all livestock grazing from the Kaweah ACEC to protect sensitive biological, geological and cultural resources.

Comment Source(s): 253-9

Response: This comment was presented as a brief request and lacks sufficient detail on which to modify the grazing allocation in the Kaweah ACEC. The alternatives provide a full array of measures to protect sensitive biological, geological and cultural resources; many of which would be implemented on a site-specific level based on a demonstrated need.

5.5.14.19 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should ensure that continued access is allow within and across ACECs, specifically Lo-Kern and Compensation Lands ACECs, to access existing facilities and infrastructure. Routes that are the only connection to these facilities and infrastructure should be designated as 'Authorized'.

Comment Source(s): 236-2

Response: Access to private property across public lands, whether within an ACEC or not, requires an authorization. Those routes with such authorization will be designated accordingly as motorized or motorized - authorized. Any routes that have been incorrectly designated in the PRMP will be corrected through a process associated with reviewing these authorizations. Any routes without such authorization that have been designated closed but are needed for continued operations should be brought to BLM's attention through the appropriate authorization request.

5.5.14.20 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should be modified to exclude wind energy development from all ACECs, as the required infrastructure to support these developments is larger than the foot-print of the wind turbine alone.

Comment Source(s): 239-6

Response: The PRMP identifies all ACECs as ROW exclusion areas for utility scale renewable energy projects (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.17 – ACECs).

5.5.14.21 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should discuss the short- and long- term benefits to watershed health, recreation and preservation of natural and cultural resources, resulting from the additional protection of WSAs and ACECs.

Comment Source(s): 261-60

Response: The PRMP includes brief descriptions of the short and long-term benefits of protective management provided by the alternatives including designation of ACECs (Chapter 4, Section 4.2 – Biological Resources, Section 4.4 – Cultural Resources, Section 4.9 – Water Resources, and Section 4.15 – Recreation). It should be noted that there would be no additional protection from WSAs as the existing condition does not change.

5.5.14.22 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The ACEC maps in the DRMP are at too large a scale to determine the lands impacts by ACEC expansions. For clarity the RMP should provide smaller scale maps for each ACEC.

Comment Source(s): 227-26

Response: Due to printing and budgetary constraints providing maps with greater detail is not possible; however, electronic sources of the PRMP include boundary maps for ACECs in KML/KMZ (Google Earth) format.

5.5.14.23 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should not expand the Piute Cypress ACEC and not apply special management that closes the area to all modes of travel except by foot. It is well documented there is a 700 acre Piute Cypress Grove in the area. Depending, however, on which section of the DRMP one reads the existing Piute Cypress ACEC is 1104 acre (page 107 & 307 DRMP) or 930 acres (page 48 DRMP) and would seem to be sufficient to protect the 700 acre grove. Thus questioning the suitability of expanding the existing ACEC by 1587 acres, which the BLM have erroneously characterized this as a “slight expansion” (DRMP page 92). In reality this more than doubling of this ACEC may just be expanding the ACEC to fit the arbitrary BLM boundary rather than the boundary of the Piute Cypress area. Furthermore, the area is not well suited to foot travel, thus the “special management” essentially closes the area. The area has large elevation changes, no water and is not especially scenic compared to numerous others. Closing the area to motorized, mechanized and equestrian uses shuts down the only access from the Lake Isabella community to the extensive OHV opportunity on Forest Service lands in the Piute Mountains.

Comment Source(s): 227-30, 227-32

Response: The PRMP has been modified to include additional information regarding the locations of newly discovered Piute Cypress groves (Chapter 3, Section 3.17 – ACECs). The proposed plan alternative of the PRMP includes no special management attention related to the restriction of travel within the ACEC (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.17 – ACECs). Routes may be designated as closed or for authorized use based on other resource concerns unrelated to the relevant and important values of the ACEC.

5.5.15 Back Country Byways

5.5.15.1 Comment (paraphrased):

Continue the designation of Canebrake and Long Valley Loop Road as the Chimney Creek Backcountry Byway and maintenance of the road as a Type II Byway (Alternative E). Furthermore, restore access along the road where it crosses private property.

Comment Source(s): 216-2

Response: The BLM has determined it to be infeasible to restore the connectivity of the Long Valley Loop Road during the life of this RMP as is maintenance of this road to the standards of a Type II Byway.

5.5.16 Wild and Scenic Rivers

5.5.16.1 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP did not meet its statutory obligation to cooperate with affected state and local agencies (including ACWA members), therefore the associated Wild and Scenic Rivers Suitability Study must be reinitiated so that state and local agencies can participate as full partners.

Comment Source(s): 222-1, 254-2

Response: During the scoping phase for the RMP a number of public notifications including; a Federal Register Notice of Intent; press releases; and individual mailings/emails, indicated the preparation of the RMP and indicated the fact that Wild and Scenic Rivers would be addressed in the document. In addition, open public scoping meetings were held to explain the planning process and involve interested parties in establishing what specific issues the RMP should address. Furthermore, a number of agencies with interests in the planning area were invited to participate in the planning process as a cooperating agency; however, each agency invited declined the opportunity. Additional details on the scoping process and the result of scoping are provided in Chapters 1 and 5. The ample opportunity to raise concerns and efforts made during the scoping phase meet any obligations the agency has in preparing both the RMP and the included Wild and Scenic Suitability Report.

The public comment period on these draft documents (in which this comment was received) provided further opportunity for agency and interested party cooperation in these documents, allowing these entities to specific provide feedback, propose edits and question the specific information included in these documents. These comments are addressed and contribute to the PRMP/FEIS.

5.5.16.2 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should consider and clarify the potential impacts on power generation, and those dependent on such power, as a result of proposed wild and scenic river recommendations.

Comment Source(s): 218-1

Response: The RMP analyzed the impacts of its recommendation of all suitable rivers for inclusion in the NWSRS. As part of this analysis specific consideration on impacts to hydroelectric power generation and therefore indirect economic impacts to electricity users was not given, since no action had identifiable impacts on any existing generation facilities, authorizations or valid rights that those involved in power generation may have. Furthermore, reasonably foreseeable actions were considered in this analysis; however there is no knowledge of any reasonably foreseeable actions related to hydroelectric power generation. Even in regard to the San Joaquin River there is no specific information available for potential for hydroelectric power generation associated with BORs feasibility study of Temperance Flat RM274.

With regard to other types of power generation the impact of Wild and Scenic River recommendations and the associated exclusion zone for utility scale renewable energy projects

were fully analyzed. There were however, no reasonably foreseeable actions to be analyzed related to other types of power generation (gas, coal, nuclear etc.).

5.5.16.3 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should consider importance of recommending the Lower Kern River for Wild and Scenic designation. The suitability report fails to recognize the value of combining the 3.5 river miles of the lower Kern that are contained within public lands with the 30 miles downstream that are contained on Forest Service lands and already determined suitable by the Forest Service. It simply makes sense to have the entire lower Kern, from Lake Isabella to the mouth of the canyon, under the same Wild and Scenic designation. The report also highlights the significant increase in recreation on this reach. It is exactly because of the significance of this recreational resource that this section of the lower Kern deserves Wild and Scenic protection.

Comment Source(s): 265-2

Response: The proposed plan alternative of the PRMP has been modified to recommend the Lower Kern River for inclusion in the NWSRS (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.21 – Wild and Scenic Rivers). This determination was made based on consideration of the proposed management of the Keyesville SRMA including in the PRMP; which when fully implemented would alleviate that management concerns presented in the suitability report.

5.5.16.4 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should include clarification as to how suitable wild and scenic river segments will be managed.

Comment Source(s): 261-52

Response: Information concerning how suitable Wild and Scenic River segments would be managed is included in both Chapter 2, Section 2.2.21 – Wild and Scenic Rivers and Chapter 3, Section 3.21 – Wild and Scenic Rivers.

5.5.16.5 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should be modified to include additional information concerning ORVs for the San Joaquin River. There is abundant evidence that the San Joaquin River Gorge Segments 1-2 possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreation, educational, cultural, wildlife, botanical, and ecological values. These findings should be recognized in the RMP. Furthermore, the ORVs for this river segment should be consistently identified through the RMP

Comment Source(s): 267-3, 267-8, 272-1

Response: This comment was presented as a brief request and lacks sufficient detail and documentation on which to adjust the PRMP. The PRMP has, however, been modified to consistently identify the ORVs for the San Joaquin River (Chapter 3, Section 3.21 – Wild and Scenic Rivers).

5.5.16.6 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should describe attempts to coordinate joint suitability studies and reconsider coordination with the National Park Service and National Forest Service regarding the suitability study of the North Fork of the Kaweah River, East Fork of the Kaweah River, Middle Fork of the Kaweah River, and Lower Kern River. Joint studies should be conducted by all three agencies as indicated in the Caliente ROD, 1997. When jointly studied suitability findings for these rivers may change given the additional federal management capability and resources contributing the ORVs present.

Comment Source(s): 6-2, 267-8, 267-13, 267-14, 267-16, 267-17, 267-21, 267-24, 267-26

Response: The BLM invited both the National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service to cooperate on the Bakersfield RMP, including Wild and Scenic River studies and determinations. Both agencies declined the opportunity to cooperate. As such, the BLM completed suitability determinations in accordance with its land use planning and wild and scenic rivers policies and guidance, without specific coordination with these agencies.

In light of the jurisdictional division (western stream bank BLM, eastern bank NPS) of the North Fork of the River above the section studied and determined suitable in the PRMP, this segment will at some future point undergo a separate eligibility study, and if appropriate suitability study.

5.5.16.7 Comment (paraphrased):

Due to the vertical separation between the North Fork of the Kaweah River and North Fork Drive, and the extensive stretch of this river segment bordered by WSA the preliminary category of the river should be change from Recreational to Scenic.

Comment Source(s): 267-10

Response: The PRMP has been modified to change the preliminary category of the North Fork of the Kaweah River to Scenic in light of the restrictions placed on the North Fork recreation sites and the vertical separation between North Fork Drive and the river itself.

5.5.16.8 Comment (paraphrased):

Due to the vertical separation between the East Fork of the Kaweah River and adjacent road, the preliminary category of the river should be changed from Recreational to Scenic.

Comment Source(s): 267-18

Response: The PRMP has been modified to change the preliminary category of the East Fork of the Kaweah River to Scenic in light of the vertical separation between Mineral King Road and the river itself.

5.5.16.9 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should clarify the conflict between intensive recreational use of the Keyesville area and recommendation of the Lower Kern River as suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS. Intensive recreation opportunities, including whitewater boating, dispersed camping, recreational mining,

shooting and OHV use, constitute the recreational ORVs and should therefore infer eligibility of the segment.

Comment Source(s): 267-20

Response: The conflict between intensive recreational use and the Lower Kern River recommendation was based on the ability or inability of the BLM to appropriately manage this use while protecting the rivers ORVs. The PRMP makes determination that, in consideration of the proposed management of the Keyesville SRMA, when fully implemented, would be remedy this conflict. As such, the PRMP recommends the Lower Kern River for inclusion in the NWSRS (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.21 – Wild and Scenic Rivers).

5.5.16.10 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should afford protection to the 3 mile segment of the San Joaquin River below the Kerkoff Powerhouse. This segment, rich in natural history and equally scenic, is deserving of preservation and should be protected from possible inundation due to enlarging Millerton Reservoir.

Comment Source(s): 267-20

Response: The three mile section of the San Joaquin River below the Kerkoff Powerhouse is withdrawn to BOR and managed by the BLM through a management agreement. As such, the final eligibility/suitability determination should be made cooperatively with BOR. Due to time, budget and staffing restraints this cooperation could not occur; therefore the RMP makes no determinations on this segment of river.

5.5.16.11 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should re-evaluate the eligibility of the San Joaquin River, as the eligibility findings appear to be in conflict with the existing conditions along the river and therefore the San Joaquin River does not meet the Criteria for designation. Specifically;

1) The identified segment of the San Joaquin River is not free-flowing. The San Joaquin River has been diverted and dammed since the mid-19th century. Hydroelectric power interests began exploring the San Joaquin River in the late 1890s. Currently, 19 powerhouses and 18 related reservoirs with a total storage capacity of over 1.1 million acre feet (MAF) exist in the upper San Joaquin River basin at and upstream of Friant Dam. (Upper San Joaquin Storage Investigation - Initial Alternatives Information Report, Hydropower Technical Appendix, June 2005 -- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, California Department of Water Resources, page 2-1.) Because of the extensive existing development in this area, Segment 1 of the San Joaquin River cannot be considered "free-flowing."

2) Segment 1 of the Upper San Joaquin River does not possess any outstandingly remarkable values. First, the visual features of the identified segment of the river are neither notable nor exemplary within this geographic region, particularly since the river has undergone such extensive prior development for hydropower and water storage uses. Second, as residents of the San Joaquin Valley can attest, the recreational opportunities afforded by this remote segment of the river are not unusual enough to attract visitors to the region, nor are visitors

willing to travel long distances to use the river resources for recreational purposes. Third, the geologic features of the identified segment are not unusual or unique; rather, they are commonplace within this region. Fourth, because of the extensive development for hydropower and water storage uses, the area does not produce or contain habitat for resident, indigenous, and/or anadromous fish species. Fifth, the identified segment of the river likewise does not include nationally or regionally important populations of resident or indigenous wildlife species dependent on the river environment, nor does it include exceptionally high quality habitat for wildlife of national or regional significance, unique habitat or a critical link in habitat conditions for State, federally listed, or candidate threatened and endangered species. Finally, the area is devoid of either cultural or historic resources. Consequently, Segment 1 of the San Joaquin River does not possess the requisite outstandingly remarkable values to qualify it for consideration for inclusion within the NWSRS.

Comment Source(s): 222-2, 222-3, 222-4, 222-5

Response: The San Joaquin River was studied for eligibility in accordance with BLM Manual 8351. This includes the determination of whether the studied river segment is in “free-flowing” condition as defined by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968. “Free-flowing” condition allows for the existence of small dams, diversion works, or other minor structures and does not require the river to be naturally flowing (i.e., flowing without upstream manipulation). Segment 1 of the San Joaquin River from the base Kerckhoff Dam to Kerckhoff Powerhouse tailrace was studied for eligibility and determined to be in “free-flowing” condition.

The segment of river studied (from the base Kerckhoff Dam to Kerckhoff Powerhouse tailrace) is located in a remote, undeveloped area. Any prior development for hydropower and water storage is not visible from the majority of the studied segment. As such, when considered against other public lands within the geographic region, the scenic quality is both notable and exemplary, indicating an Outstandingly Remarkable Value of Scenic. In addition, based on knowledge of Native American Values in the area the eligibility study found the studied segment of the river to possess an Outstandingly Remarkable Value of Cultural. The presence of these ORVs is sufficient to qualify this segment for consideration for inclusion within the NWSRS.

Based on the findings of the eligibility report the PRMP continues to address suitability of this segment of river and proposed plan alternative recommends the river segment as suitable.

5.5.16.12 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should re-evaluate the suitability of the San Joaquin River, as the suitability findings appear to be in conflict with the existing conditions along the river and therefore the San Joaquin River does not meet the Criteria for designation. As designation cannot protect free flowing character and outstandingly remarkable values that do not exist. Furthermore, the DRMP fails demonstrate that BLM gave appropriate consideration to the reasonably foreseeable Temperance Flat RM274 project when evaluating the suitability of Segment 1 for WRS designation. The DRMP lists only potential negatives effects of the Temperance Flat RM 274 Reservoir on ORVs; there is no mention of the projects potential benefits as described in numerous Reclamation and DWR documents. The draft RMP therefore fails to demonstrate the suitability of Segment 1 for inclusion in the NWSRS.

Comment Source(s): 222-6, 222-7, 254-1

Response: The eligibility study on Segment 1 of the San Joaquin River found this river segment from Kerckhoff Dam to Kerckhoff Powerhouse as eligible with both free-flowing character and outstandingly remarkable values.

The suitability report did consider reasonably foreseeable uses of the land and related waters that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed if the area were included in the NWSRS. This section of the report specifically addresses the Upper San Joaquin River Storage Basin Project; the lack of a published draft or final Proposed Action, however, brings into question “reasonably foreseeable” status of this project. Analysis of projects that are not considered reasonable foreseeable would be speculative at best and are not required by NEPA.

Based on the findings of the eligibility report and suitability study the PRMP continues to recommend to congress the river segment as suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS. This recommendation does not guarantee a final designation and ultimately congress will determine the future of this river segment.

5.5.16.13 *Comment (paraphrased):*

The RMP should clarify through documentation the assertion that the San Joaquin River Gorge does not possess a recreation ORVs. The implication is that the Gorge is not sufficiently unusual to attract visitors to the geographic region, but no data is provided in support of this inference. Furthermore, the RMP doesn’t recognize whitewater kayaking as a significant recreation use of this river.

Comment Source(s): 267-5, 267-6

Response: There is no documentation to support the assertion that the studied segment of the San Joaquin River possesses a recreational ORV. Information regarding recreational use of this segment of river is anecdotal at best and insufficient to document the presence of such an ORV. Information reporting use of the public lands within the San Joaquin River Gorge is provided in Chapter 3, Section 3.15 – Recreation and Visitor Services, but does not necessarily pertain to the river segment itself.

5.5.16.14 *Comment (paraphrased):*

For the San Joaquin River Gorge the RMP should clarify the region (analysis area) used to establish the ORVs as many of the ORVs are dependent on being important at a regional or national level.

Comment Source(s): 267-7

Response: The region or analysis area used to establish the presence of ORVs for the San Joaquin River Gorge varied based on the resources being evaluated. Further clarification for the eligibility report is not required in order to determine suitability and ultimately for the authorized officer to make a reasoned choice between the alternatives.

5.5.16.15 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP claims the need for "flexible" management to deal with potential changes in TES species status then argues that "other administrative protections are more appropriate for protecting the identified values" (RMP pg. 3-28). The plea for flexible management needs clarification.

Comment Source(s): 267-22

Response: Flexible management is required for the segment of the Lower Kern River based on the density of resource values in the area that may at times be in direct conflict e.g., intense recreational use and protection of natural and cultural resources. The management provided by the proposed plan of the PRMP has been determined to adequately address this need and as such the proposed plan alternative includes the recommendation of the Lower Kern River as suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.21 – Wild and Scenic Rivers).

5.5.17 Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas**5.5.17.1 Comment (paraphrased):**

The wilderness boundary signs for the newly acquired Richards/Edgar properties have been installed in the wrong place – too close to the paved road without adequate space for safe public parking. To remedy this situation, a trailhead needs to be established as soon as possible. Furthermore, the wilderness boundary should be moved east to the area of the existing foundations and water well.

Comment Source(s): 23-2

Response: The proposal to move the wilderness boundary is outside the authority of the BLM and would require Congressional intervention. The placement of wilderness boundary signs is beyond the scope of this broad scale RMP as it is an implementation action.

5.5.17.2 Comment (paraphrased):

The designation of new Wilderness Areas in proximity to existing utility corridors facilitates inevitable conflicts between maintenance activities and resource management whilst enabling motorized trespass into Wilderness areas. These concerns could be remedied by the establishment of a half mile "buffer" on either side of existing utility infrastructure between designated Wilderness areas.

Comment Source(s): 195-3

Response: Designation of new Wilderness areas is beyond the authority of the BLM and requires a Congressional/Presidential action, during which consideration is given to wilderness boundaries to determine appropriate access to existing facilities, uses and authorizations. The RMP does not designation any new Wilderness areas.

5.5.18 Social and Economic Considerations

5.5.18.1 Comment (paraphrased):

How did BLM calculate the economic impacts of mineral collecting and mineral exploration and development? Did BLM consider that mineral collectors' contribute to local economies by their exploration activities and collecting? In the information provided in DRMP the economic contribution of mining and mineral collecting is underestimated. There are hundreds of mineral collecting clubs and mining companies operating in California and thousands of mining claims. These individuals and companies spend money to maintain operations and bring income into the adjacent rural communities.

Comment Source(s): 9-4, 13-2, 25-2, 30-2, 33-2, 121-2, 134-13

Response: The BLM utilized the IMPLAN input-output model to estimate the economic contribution from solid mineral (locatable and saleable minerals including recreational prospecting) removal from BLM-administered lands in the Planning Area. The most recent data available for BLM outputs and expenditures (current and reasonable foreseeable) was used to estimate the economic contribution of the BLM programs within the Planning Area, however, consideration of the economic contribution of mining and mineral collecting statewide is outside the scope of this RMP. The economic contribution from solid mineral activity in the RMP Decision Area is described in the PRMP, Chapter 3, Section 3.X.X – Social and Economic Resources (Mining).

The economic contribution from the expenditures of local recreational mineral collectors was not considered since they do not bring "new money" into local economies as described in Chapter 3, Section 3.23 – Social and Economic Resources (Tourism and Recreation). The contribution of non-local recreational mineral collectors was considered in the tourism and recreation analysis.

5.5.18.2 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMPs use of \$16.40 as the average statewide price per AUM for private land has no relevance to the productivity of public lands, particularly in western Kern County. The RMP should remove this comparison or adjust appropriately.

Comment Source(s): 208-5

Response: The statewide average price per AUM for private land is a statistic from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and is used to illustrate the difference between the value of private grazing lands and public grazing lands with no reference to the productivity of public lands. Productivity differences contribute to the differences in costs that are realized by area ranchers with public land grazing permits or leases (Chapter 3, Section 3.23 – Social and Economic Resources (Livestock Production)).

5.5.18.3 Comment (paraphrased):

The RMP should clarify the statement “this federal land is the least expensive grazing land available, hence use and access is coveted by area ranchers even though additional costs are usually incurred to use these lands.” The term coveted is a value laden statement and should be removed from the document. The situation with regard to federal inholdings and the origin of federal ownership should be clearly represented so that ranchers will not be misrepresented.

Comment Source(s): 208-4

Response: The text of the PRMP has been changed in response to this concern (Chapter 3, Section 3.23– Social and Economic Resources (Livestock Production)).

5.5.18.4 Comment (paraphrased):

The DRMP fails to sufficiently document the broad public and economic benefits derived from livestock grazing and from on-site business owners and operators. Livestock grazing is critical in mitigating the potential for wildfires that can cause harm to life, air and property. Experts have also recognized that herding animals play a beneficial role in brittle environment stability and productivity, such as the conditions found on the public land. Cattle hooves break up and loosen crusted soils and trample down old plant parts, thereby creating mulch and an ideal seed bed, allowing water to penetrate. Cattle also fertilize the soil through deposits of urine and manure. Cattle grazing encourages plant diversity when cattle graze down the taller aggressive plants, preventing them from shading out and overpowering more vulnerable plants. The document does not adequately recognize the economic, cultural and community benefits that are accrued from the long-term specialized economies like the cattle ranching business who, in spite of the mounting challenges associated with operating amongst the checker-boarded inholdings of the public lands, manage to produce beef, support the tax base and local economy, participate in the community life and contribute to the continuity and stability of the area.

Comment Source(s): 208-3

Response: The broad public benefits derived from livestock grazing are discussed in terms of non-market value. The PRMP has been modified to incorporate the new approach to estimating the economic contributions of livestock grazing (Chapter 4, Section 4.23 - Social and Economic Resources).

5.5.18.5 Comment (paraphrased):

The socio-economic analysis in the DRMP fails to consider the benefits of ending livestock grazing to the tourism, hunting and recreation sectors, on scarce water resources, and to the wildlife, rare plant, rare habitats and other resources that the no grazing alternative would protect. This deficiency should be rectified in the RMP.

Comment Source(s): 253-8

Response: The text of the PRMP has been changed in response to this concern and addresses the non-market values of the cessation of livestock grazing under Alternative D (Chapter 4, Section 4.23 – Social and Economic Resources).

5.5.18.6 Comment (paraphrased)

The DRMP does not fully explain the impacts on local residence and businesses resulting from restrictions in the Temblor Range on access and route usage. The locals that traverse the lands for off-road fun, hunting, and occasional sightseeing will experience an increased level of discontent if restrictive plans are implemented. In addition, the land receives numerous visitors at a continual rate throughout the year that infuse Taft's local economy through avenues such as hotels, restaurants, convenience stores, and grocery stores. The reduction in legally accessible recreational trails will unmistakably reduce this influx.

Comment Source(s): 232-1

Response: There is no evidence to support a decline in recreational visits to the Temblor area as a result of the management prescribed in the PRMP. Visitation figures are reported Decision Area wide and changes in visitation patterns may result in lower visitation in some areas and higher visitation in others but net gain in visitation (Chapter 4, Section 4.23 – Social and Economic Resources (Recreation)). Chapter 3, Section 3.17 – Recreation and Visitor Services predicts recreational visits field office-wide will increase in a similar rate and fashion throughout the life of the plan as they have in previous years. As such, there is no anticipated impact on Taft's local economy as a result of the proposed management of the Temblor Range.

5.6 Completion of the Planning Process

Release of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS initiates a 30-day protest period for proposed land use plan-level decisions. The 30-day protest period begins on the date the EPA publishes its Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Proposed RMP/Final EIS in the *Federal Register*. During this protest period, any person who participated in the planning process and has an interest that may be adversely affected by approval of the land use plan-level decisions may submit a protest.

Instructions for filing a protest regarding the Proposed RMP/Final EIS are provided in 43 CFR 1610.5-2. A protest may only raise those issues that were submitted for the record during the planning process. Emailed and faxed protests will not be accepted as valid protests, unless the protesting party also provides the original letter by either regular or overnight mail postmarked by the close of the protest period.

After protests are resolved, the BLM California State Director will publish the Approved RMP and Record of Decision. Its availability will be announced through the mailing list, Web site, and regional media.

5.7 List of Preparers

Name	Role/Responsibility
Bureau of Land Management	
Tim Smith	Field Office Manager
Steve Larson	Assistant Field Office Manager (Resources); Socioeconomics
Sue Porter	RMP Project Lead (08/09- present); ACECs; Socioeconomics
Lisa Ashley	Air & Atmospheric Values; Soil Resources; Water Resources
Kim Cuevas	Cultural Resources; Native American Religious Concerns and Consultation; Paleontology
Peter De Witt	Recreation; Comprehensive Trails and Travel Management; Visual Resources; Cave and Karst Resources; Wilderness Characteristics, Special Designations
Karen Doran	Livestock Grazing
Glenn Harris	Air and Atmospheric Values
Denis Kearns	Biological Resources – Vegetation
Amy Kuritsubo	Biological Resources - Wildlife; ACECs
Sue Lopez	Lands and Realty
Jeff Prude	Minerals (oil and gas)
Tracy Rowland	San Joaquin River Gorge Manager
Chris Ryan	Wildland Fire Ecology
Larry Saslaw	Biological Resources – Wildlife
Diane Simpson	Lands and Realty; Renewable Energy
Kent Varvel	Hazardous and Solid Waste
Larry Vredenburg	GIS and Mapping
Tamara Whitley	Cultural Resources; Native American Religious Concerns and Consultation; Paleontology
Gregg Wilkerson	Minerals; Geology/Paleontology
Katherine Worn	RMP Project Lead (06/08 – 01/09)
Consultants	
Henry Eichman	
Tetra Tech, Inc.	
EMPSi	